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ZZAP! 64

ISSUE 32 December 1987

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Printed in England by Carlisle Web Offset (Member of the BPCC Group), Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria.
Colour Origination by Scan Studios, Wallace Road, London N1

Distributed by COMAG, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE

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ABC
MEMBER OF THE AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS
Average monthly sales for the period
JAN – JUNE 1987
Total: **77,483**
UK/Eire: **63, 809**

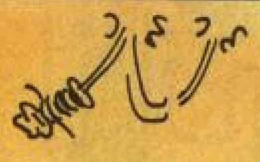
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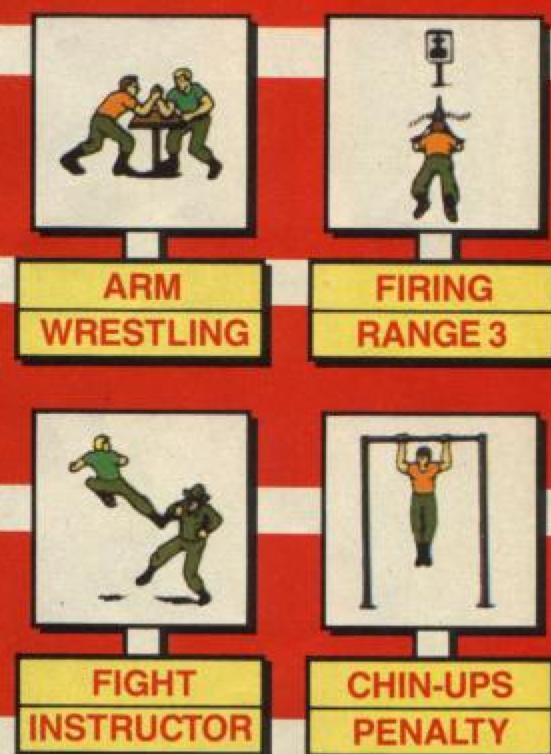
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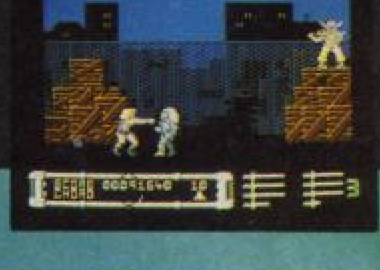
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ZZAP! ED



LAND OF CONFUSION

At the moment ZZAP! is just like a badly written soap opera – it can't go through a month without some major upheaval. This month's installment sees the departure of Ciarán Brennan, who's decided to make a pilgrimage to the Great CD Player of Forest Gate. It's a long and perilous journey, and I'm sure you'll all join us in wishing him the best of luck.

So now there's a different idiot at the helm. Still, it's not all bad news – this months' ZZAP! is packed with goodies, and contains a fabulous 16 page *Judge Death* comic strip, a *Predator* feature and previews of the latest US Gold arcade conversions. If that isn't enough, there's also a 16-Bit supplement featuring reviews and previews of the latest Amiga and Atari ST games, and a wealth of Commodore 64 reviews, including THREE Gold Medal games and FOUR Sizzlers! What a month!!

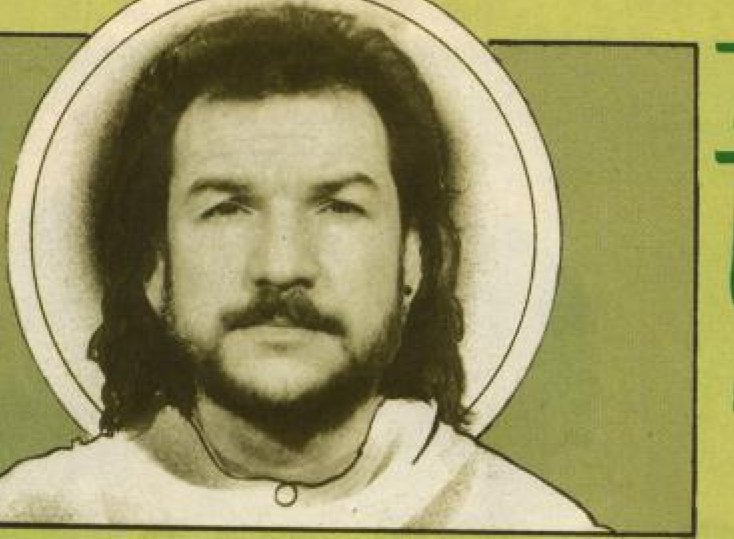
If you think that's good, wait until you see next month's amazing Christmas Special! As well as a huge arcade feature, extra playing tips, a retrospective look at 1987 and a comprehensive compilation round-up, we'll be giving you advice as to what to ask Santa for Christmas, naming the ten worst and ten best computer games of all time and looking at what 1988 has to offer. There are also a heap of competitions planned, with top prizes including an amazing remote control television and video, a BMX bike, a chance to partake in a hovercraft race and the opportunity for ten readers to go to war in the Combat Zone. Don't forget the regular features, reviews and previews either . . .

See you next month, that's as long as I don't get shot, Paul doesn't marry Lofty and Steve doesn't wake up and find it's all been a dream . . .

Julian Rignall

ADVERTISERS INDEX

GAMES REVIEWED



Mel Croucher's UNDER THE BAUD-WALK

FEAST OF ST WILLIAM FITZWILLIAM THE MAGNIFICENT

To the premier of **Jeffrey Archer**'s first play, whose name I can't quite remember. At the bar I'm jostled by **Saint Bob Geldof**, which is very odd, as I have always assumed that one holy man would instinctively recognise another. Perhaps Bob is tired. The play receives nine curtain calls, which proves that there are as many morons visiting the theatre today as there are buying rubbish software. Only twelve hours later, I meet Archer at Olympia, which he has obviously mistaken for Victoria railway station. The confused millionaire looks very tired and red-eyed, and has grown even shorter overnight, weighing in at a little over four feet. It seems that **Domark** need a bit more publicity for the disgraceful Jeffrey's *Not a Peni More Not a Peni Less*, and I am happy to help a fellow novelist down on his luck, who has chosen to name is 13-year old son 'Willie' for some Freudian reason or other. Archer's wee book informs us that the telephone number of his Lord Brigsley character is 01-735-7227. Well, this just happens to be little Jeffrey's own phone number, and I can only conclude that the poor man is desperate for someone to talk to. However, I feel sure that ZZAP! readers have better things to do than to give him a call. Haven't you?

ACCESSION OF WILLIAM THE GREAT

Now look here Tavarich, just because I've had a beer with **Billy Bragg** doesn't make me a communist. I mean, so maybe I've shot the odd Tzar and crushed a Prague or two, but ain't no Russian mole. No, I'm more a medium-paced weasel. However, there comes a time when I must nail my colours to the mast, expose myself and speak out. It is my social duty to free ZZAP! readers from the yolk and the slimy white stuff that goes round it of Thatcherite censorship. How dare she ban me from quoting to you from my personally signed copy of **Spy Catcher**. Everyone knows that we have the finest Secret Service in the world running our country, it's called the KGB, er, I mean it's called MI5, although I am not allowed to tell you why they named it after a Motorway. But I don't see how quoting from Fly Snatcher can possibly be a security risk. Here goes then, I am about to break the law, and I don't care. The public has a right to read the following amazing revelations and I quote, '**Copyright © Peter Wright, 1987, All rights reserved, Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 87-40243, printed in the United States of America, price $19.95, dedicated to my wife Lois,**'. I was going to tell you how to interface your Commodore with a Kalashnikov AK-37, but I don't have the time today. Instead I can reveal that **Tony Kavanagh** has just presented me with a hammer and sickle, and admitted that he performs the same function for **Argus** that Peter 'Spy Catcher' Wright has performed for British Security. Tony seems to think that he is the defecting (or possibly defective) captain of the Russian supersub **Red October** and is willing to pass me a boatload of secrets in return for two cups of coffee and a Rothman's Kingsize. *The Hunt for Red October* is based on best-selling author **Tom Clancy**'s book and forthcoming film, and proves once again that all Russian military personnel communicate with one another in fluent intelligent English, so that we can tell them apart from the inarticulate Yanks.

ASSASSINATION OF KING WILLIE THE LESSER

My Sillysoft Name of the Month Award goes to **Martech**, purveyors of the smuttily titled *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix*. In an unprecedented outbreak of trade description, their front man is going around calling himself **Roger Swindells**, which is as complete a sentence as **Samantha Fox** by my reckoning. My 'I learned English When Maggie Thatcher Was Education Minister' Award goes to **Gremlin Graphics** for their latest batch of press releases. The blurb for *Blood Valley* begins, 'Gremlin lie before you . . . ' Nice one, I didn't know it was their turn. Whereas *Jack The Nipper* gains points by 'bonking tasmanian devils', which should make the eyes water somewhat. Speaking of which, may I unreservedly atone to anyone I have offended Under the Baud-walk, particularly Ms **Cheri Langdell** who was caused some distress by my quoting her comments and no-comments. I had temporarily forgotten that the computer industry is now devoid of bad taste and without the humour that exploits the weaknesses of others. My sincere apologies.

BANGING TO RIGHTS OF OLD BILL THE TOTALLY INSIGNIFICANT

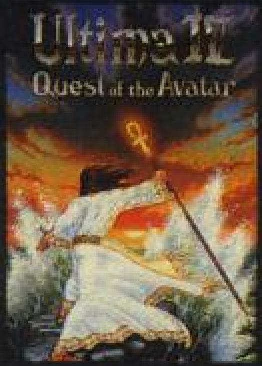
Today I was playing with my face, thanks to my Fairlight digitiser and a morbid fascination with the ageing process. As the cuckoo clock struck for more pay, which is what comes of growing cuckoos from bird seed, my own identity suddenly became clear to me, and all because of the fact that the identity of the Editor of ZZAP! is one of the most horrendous secrets in the computer world. The more observant of you will have realised that our Editors face and body undergoes horrific changes at frequent intervals in a sort of spontaneous regeneration process. Think about it . . . ZZAP! Editor, different appearance, bizarre mutation from geriatric to infant to half a bag of hedgehog flavoured crisps. Get it? Got it? You better believe it. The Editor of ZZAP! is none other than a well-known Time Lord, BBC1 every Monday, 7.30 pm. Unfortunately, **Doctor Who**'s faithful sidekick, as everyone knows, is named **Mel**, which seems that I am in reality none other than **Bonnie Langford**, and have lost the will to live.

WILHELM WURST TAG (HOLLOWAY)

Christmas is coming, and there are some very peculiar goings-on in the **Mattel** toy cupboard. **Michelle Irwin**, the elfin Public Relations bossette of Mattel toys, has just told me the most astounding things. Last year's all winking lip-sync storyteller **Teddy Ruxpin** has mutated into none other than **Mother Goose**, probably due to the radiation effects of Chernobyl. His/Her synchronised pulse tape is now clothed in flowing skirts and a granny bonnet, and her beak can give you quite a surprise as she whispers fairy stories in your ear. But this is not the shocking bit, Michelle reveals that **Tropical Barbie** has run off with **Tropical Skipper**, her little sister, away from **Tropical Ken**, over an argument concerning floral swimwear. Rumours that Barbie is now living with **He-Man** are completely untrue. 'How can you be so sure?' I ask in that disarmingly innocent way of mine. 'Have you taken He-Man's trousers off?' comes the reply. 'All the relationships between our toys are purely platonic – check for yourself!' Whatever can she mean? Speaking of which, those ladies of the flowing skirt and granny bonnet **Saint Brides** are after me for a good whacking with their swishiest of corporal punishment canes, for 'being a naughty boy' and using the expression 'Shi'ite fundamentalism' within their sensibilities. Fortunately I achieved the rank of Flight-Sergeant when I was being trained to be a mass murderer by Her Majesty's minions, so my backside remains unwealdy.

CONCEPTION AND SIMULTANEOUS BIRTHDAY OF MERCY DASH (Saviour of the Software Industry)

Not since those far off days when **The PiMan** ruled supreme on the back pages of Popular Computing Weekly has there been such a cartoon event! ZZAP!'s sister magazine The Games Machine has sold off the coffee machine, white slaved the entire graphics department and bust open open the Christmas party piggy bank so that they can afford the services of my own genius and that of the world's most celebrated computer cartoonist **Robin Grenville-Evans**. The software industry is about to be saved by the Superheroine of all time, **Mercy Dash** (she's mad, she's bad, she's brought her Dad), and it is my truthful opinion that she is the best thing we have ever conceived since closing time. I can only hope that Newsfield will always remember the documented fact that when the PiMan resigned from Pop Comp its circulation plummeted by several hundred percent. The quality of Mercy, on the other hand is not strained. Must Dash.

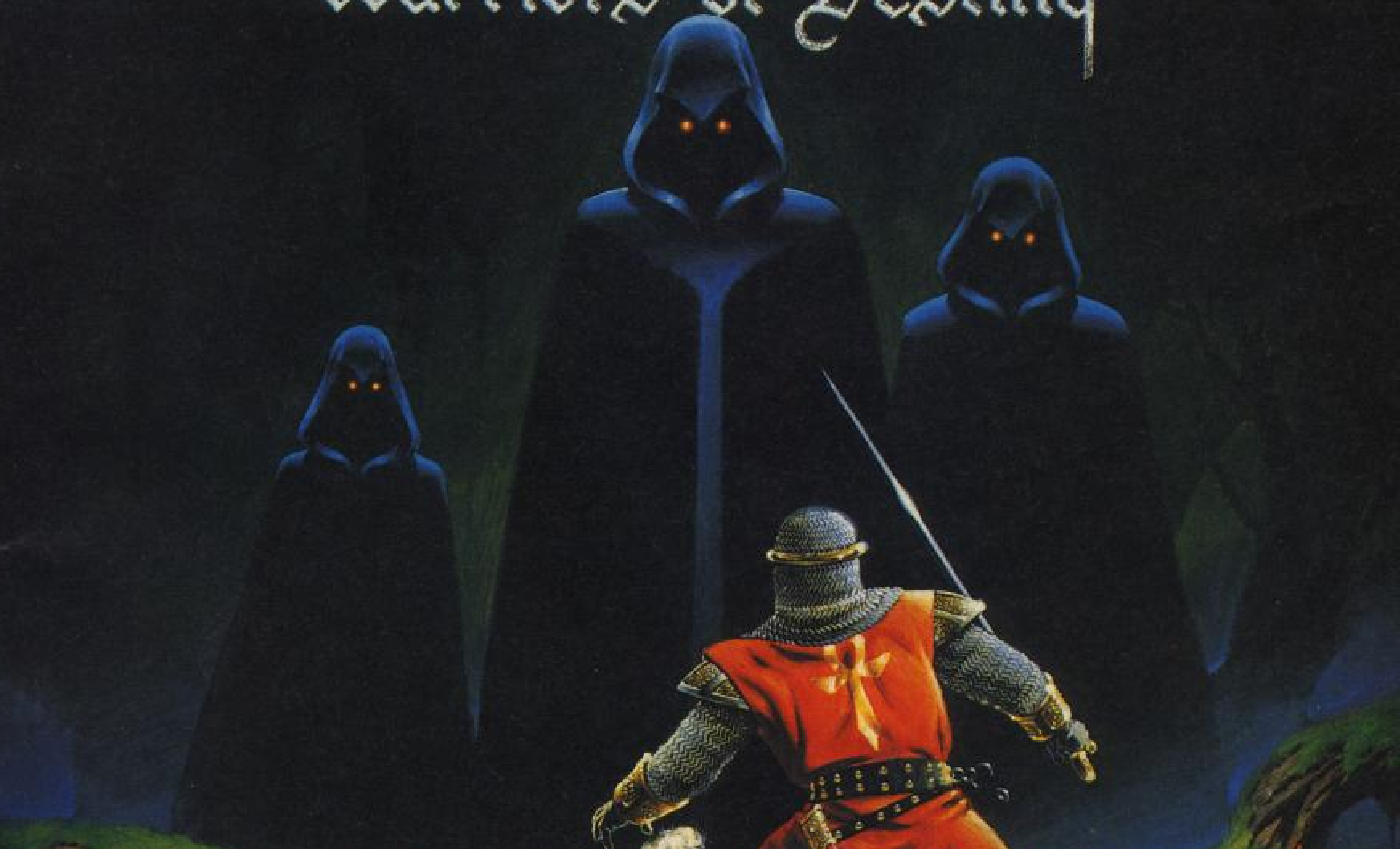


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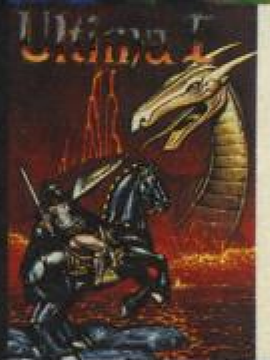
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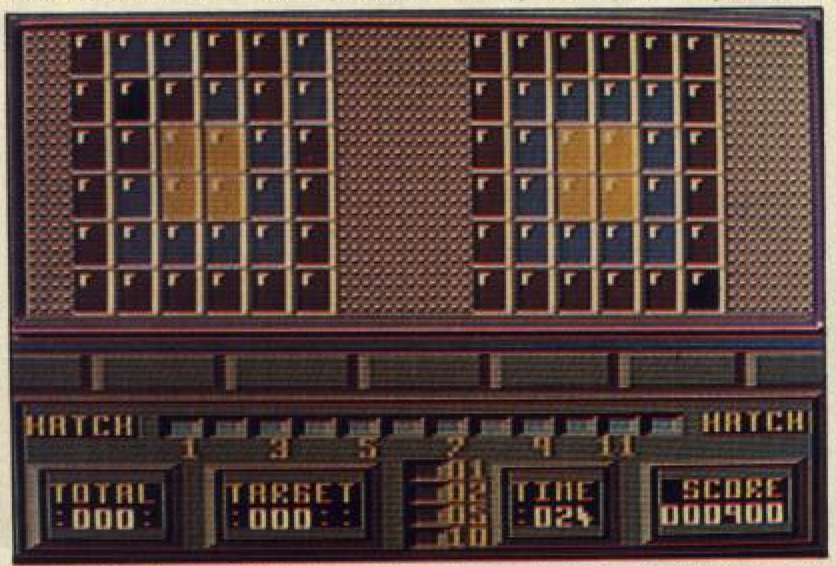
Out in the far reaches of space lies a giant, empty spaceship which has been drifting for over 2,000 years. The inert vessel is intact, save for a missing circuit board, the scattered components of which are located around the ship's individual hulls. If this board was assembled, the entire ship could be guided back to Earth.

The player is volunteered for the mission, and flies over the multi-directionally scrolling spaceship in search of the components. There are 12 docking ports dotted around the spaceship, and entering each one reveals a sub-game. The collection of these games include a horizontal 'Centipede', a 'Breakout' variant, a simplified 'Painter' game and even an implementation of Solitaire.

Each game has an objective which is completed within a time limit. If the attempt is successful, some missing components are added to the circuit board. If not, the player is expelled without reward and may only return when another game has been tackled.

Flying from port to port is a hazardous occupation as the giant ship's robot guardian fighters fly around and constantly fire at the player's ship, wearing down its shields with every accurate hit. Shields are replenished by successfully completing a sub-game, but if they are reduced to zero, a further hit proves fatal, and the mission ends.

When the entire circuit board is assembled and working, the mission is complete, and the ship is taken back to Earth.



► **This logic puzzle is just one of 12 such games to be found within the good ship Discovery**



The idea of disguising a series of sub-games within a main game isn't very original, but those included in Discovery **are both varied and extremely playable. The mere fact that there are 12 of them is quite appealing, and there are only one or two which fail to please to any great extent. The graphics have that typical CRL feel to them – slightly chunky and bordering on the gaudy, but to be fair, some sections are very good. Ironically, the exterior space battle is the weakest link, which looks as if it's using the jerky scrolling routine from CRL's earlier effort,** Death or Glory. **Still, if you can ignore the space section, the sub-games included should provide plenty of entertainment.**



CRL have cheated a bit with Discovery, **as it's merely a compilation of rather old and unoriginal games linked by a very basic shoot 'em up. However, the puzzles are instantly playable and not too hard, so it's very easy to get into the action. Building up a circuit board is a novel idea, and with the wide variety of sub-games it provides quite a challenge. My only reservation is that a couple of the puzzles rely on random elements too much, making it difficult to develop an effective strategy to beat them.** Discovery **may look old hat, but it's extremely playable and the sub-games work well.**



There's certainly plenty of variety in CRL's latest release. The twelve sub-games are a mixed bag of puzzle, shoot 'em up and reflex – and one seems to require 100% luck to complete it. The instructions are sparse, but working out how to play each game is what makes the action so enjoyable. The difficulty level is extremely well balanced, and a few more components are collected with every game, making the action very compulsive. Discovery **may be expensive, but it does offer plenty of long-term entertainment – try it out and surprise yourself.**



PRESENTATION 67%
No instructions for the sub-games (hence the title), but otherwise fine.

GRAPHICS 64%
The majority of puzzle sequences are smart, although the space section is marred by ineffective sprites and awful scrolling.

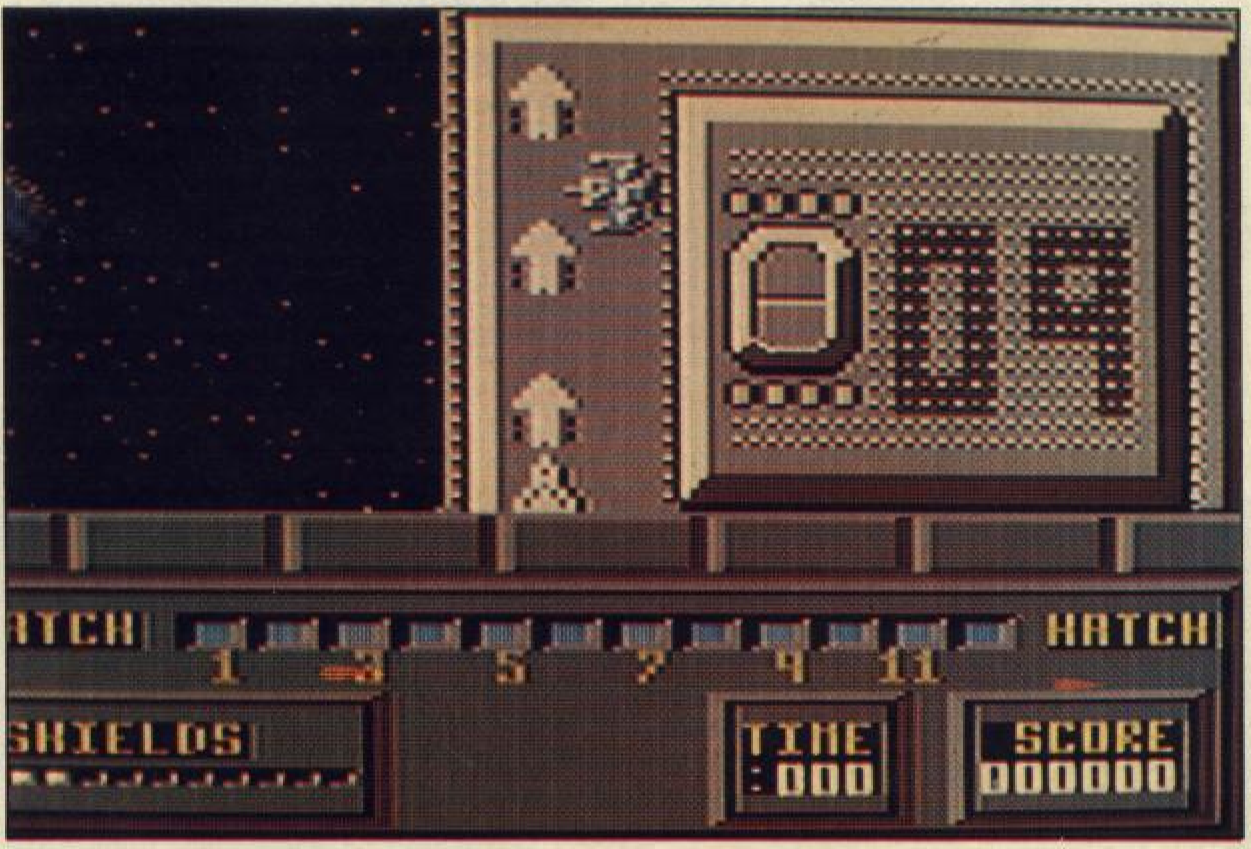
SOUND 55%
Decent title tune, but the spot effects are very weak.

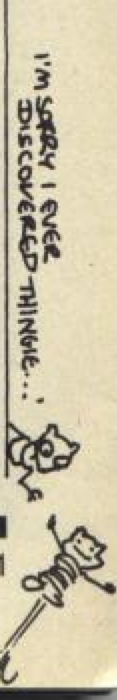
HOOKABILITY 84%
Extremely easy to get into, although the lack of instructions for the sub-games doesn't help much.

LASTABILITY 79%
The puzzles are varied and playable enough to provide a real incentive to complete the game.

OVERALL 77%
An enjoyable and strangely addictive collection of puzzle games.

► **Flying over docking bay number nine in CRL's latest game**





ZZAP! TEST — SIZZLER

MANIAC MANSION

Activision, £14.99 disk, joystick only

● Lucasfilm's innovative arcade adventure packs an eerie atmosphere

The inhabitants of Maniac Mansion, have started to behave very strangely following the crash-landing of a meteor in their back yard. Head of the household, Dr Fred has developed megalomaniac tendencies and vowed to take over the world – one teenager at a time.

The player takes the role of Dave, a typical American kid whose cosy life is suddenly interrupted when his pretty girlfriend, Sandy, is kidnapped by the evil Doctor. He plans to use her in his vile experiments, the first of which is to suck her brains out! Dave, being a goodly sort, decides to visit the Mansion at night and rescue his sweetheart before she gets sucked senseless.

Before the adventure begins, two of Dave's friends are chosen to accompany him on the mission. Six chums are presented, each with different abilities and weaknesses which are only discovered through experience. These individual characteristics, and how they are applied during play have a significant effect on the mission's outcome.

Having chosen two party members, the house is approached. The adventurers are controlled one at a time, with the functions keys used to change between the three members. This individual control method allows the party to split up in traditional B-movie tradition and explore the mansion.

The horizontally scrolling main display shows a side-on view of the currently selected adventurer. Below is a message screen and text area which contains a list of verbs and all the items in the character's inventory.

Commands are entered using a joystick controlled cursor, and involves placing the cursor on the verb required, (such as 'unlock'), moving it onto the required object on the main display (such as the door) and finally (if necessary) on the inventory item to be used (such as 'key'). The message screen prompts 'unlock door with key', and the action is activated by pressing fire. Fortunately, the parser is intelligent enough to supply prepositions for appropriate verbs. The character often offers advice, the message screen displaying his or her reactions.

Occasionally the action cuts to show a cameo scene happening elsewhere around the house – sometimes the Dr muttering snatches of his plans, or another member of the household wandering around.

To complete the mission, all three members of the party and Sandy have to be guided to safety, and the evil machinery in the basement disabled. Can it be done – or is the Doctor going to take over the world?

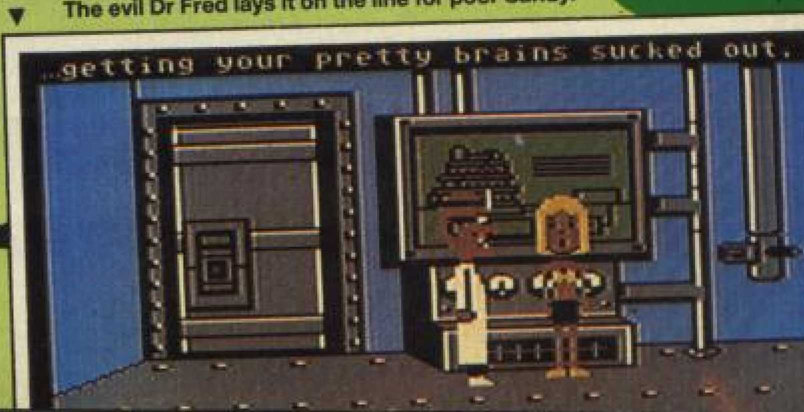


► Rignall heaven – a room full of arcade machines!

▼ **Even the TV set in the lounge works!**



▼ The evil Dr Fred lays it on the line for poor Sandy!





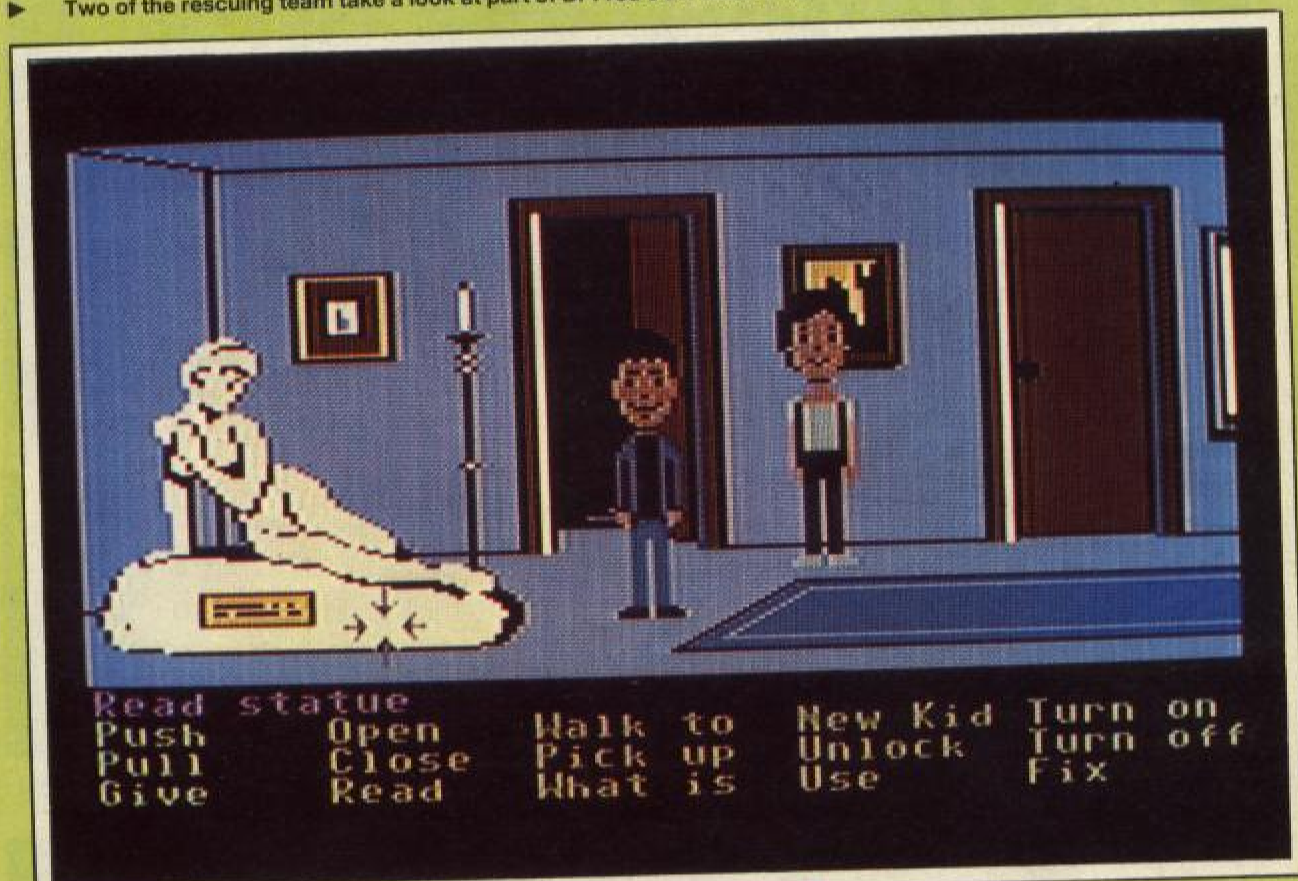
Really good arcade adventures have been in short supply recently – so this is very welcome. Maniac Mansion**'s scenario is very reminiscent of the Rocky Horror Show, and it packs a similar sort of spooky and zany atmosphere. Throughout the adventure there are both visual and aural clues to help you along – but the real way to progress is through experimentation. There's plenty of interaction, with loads of different things to pick up and explore. The control method is a doddle to use, and makes the action incredibly easy to get into. If you're an arcade adventurer with a disk drive looking for entertainment, stop off at** Maniac Mansion **and look around.**



The packaging on Lucasfilm's latest is drab to say the least, but the game is far from that. After a suitably spooky introductory sequence, the action quickly gets into full swing. Maniac Mansion feels very much like an interactive Scooby-Doo type cartoon, and I particularly like the way that the game 'cuts' from scene to scene to show the evil plotting of the mad Doctor. The humour works well – read the notice on the nuclear reactor in the basement and it says 'Made in Chernobyl'! The characters are pleasantly animated and all the locations are neatly presented, with plenty of clever touches and sound effects – especially the scratchy old record on the gramophone. The unusual menu system is easy to use and progress is initially easy, but Maniac Mansion will certainly take a fair amount of solving – anyone with adventuring tendencies and a disk drive should go straight out and get it.

If you've ever thought that the arcade adventure genre was getting a little tired, take a look the latest product from Lucasfilm and think again. Maniac Mansion combines arcade action, visual clues, perplexing puzzles and a great sense of humour to create one of the best arcade adventures I've seen. The control method is incredibly easy to use, and guiding the three intrepid explorers around the mysterious residence is highly enjoyable. Discovering new locations and objects is always rewarding, and some logical thinking is required to progress deeper into the adventure. The player interaction is tremendous, and gives the action a wonderful feel. Although the graphics and sound don't push back any barriers, they work together perfectly to create a believable, almost film-like atmosphere. Maniac Mansion definitely ranks as a 'must buy' – it's a shame that it's only available on disk.

► Two of the rescuing team take a look at part of Dr Fred's art collection



▼ The exterior of the creepy old house from *Maniac Mansion*



PRESENTATION 95%
Brilliantly constructed and superbly implemented.

GRAPHICS 80%
Large, cartoon-style sprites and nicely drawn backdrops.

SOUND 79%
Not outstanding, but the effects help to create a wonderful atmosphere.

HOOKABILITY 93%
The excellent control method makes the adventure easy to get into, and the action is addictive from the start.

LASTABILITY 86%
When the adventure is solved, return to the mansion with a new gang.

OVERALL 93%
An innovative and polished arcade adventure which shouldn't be missed.

STREET HASSLE

Melbourne House, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

It's not easy being a superhero. You stand out in a crowd, attract attention to yourself and have to beat off admirers. Underwear Man is one such crusader – but unfortunately he takes things a bit too seriously and attacks anyone that comes near him.

Resplendent in his black boots, studded wrist bands, blonde hair and startling yellow Y-fronts, UM makes his way across the horizontally scrolling suburbs of Melbourne, running the gauntlet of its odd collection of inhabitants.

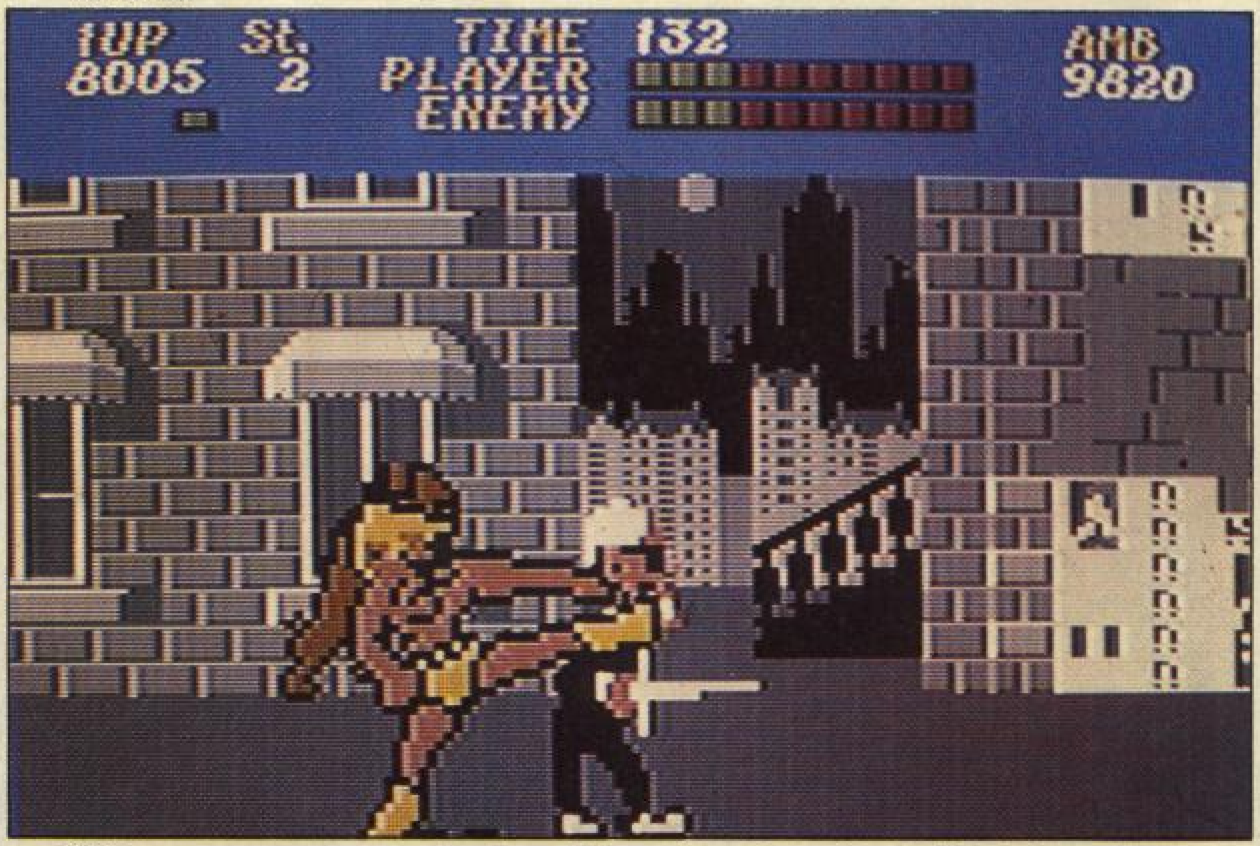
The player takes control of UM and battles hordes of fatties, stick-wielding blind men, handbag lobbing grannies, escaped giant gorillas and snarling dogs who attack individually at first, then in groups on higher levels.

UM isn't exactly defenceless, and has an amazing and often hilarious array of moves, ranging from simple kicks and punches to head butts, belly butts, swinging opponents above his head and even wringing their ears! Not all are immediately available, though, since they alter depending which level he's on.

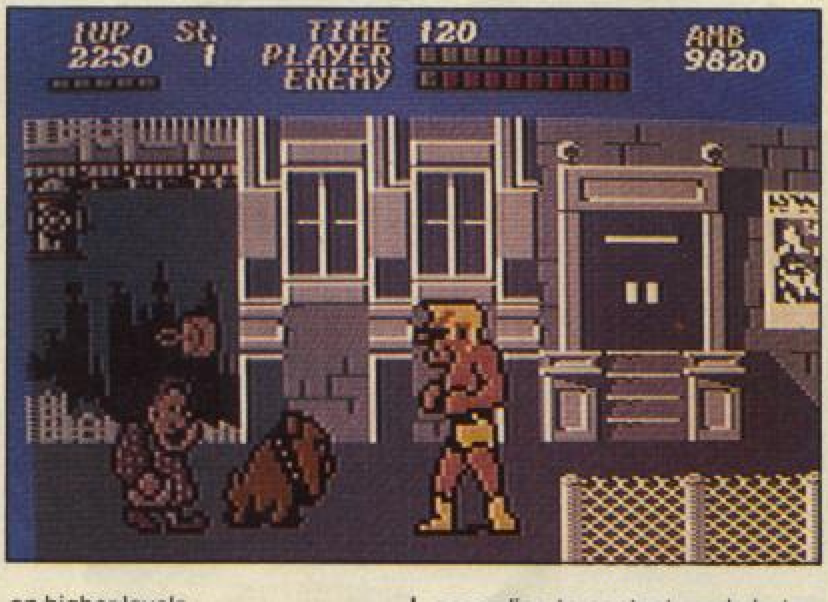
At the top of the screen are two energy bars. The first denotes UM's energy level and remains on screen throughout the game, while the second appears only when an opponent draws near. As the combat ensues, both bars diminish according to contact made between the two parties. Should UM's energy disappear completely, he loses one of this three lives and begins the level from scratch.

Lost energy is replenished by catching the winged hearts that are periodically released by a midget in a trench coat. Care should be taken, however, since on higher levels this character also rolls out bombs, and unless UM swiftly tosses it off screen he loses another life. It's certainly all go in Melbourne these days . . .

► **Our blonde, tanned and Y-fronted Australian hero beats and kicks his way through downtown Melbourne – just like real life!**



► **To avoid these evil enemies, you have to tickle the dog, and beat up the old lady . . . Who writes these things?**





I'm sure that if the Monty Python team were asked to write a computer game, they'd come up with something like this. Taking control of UM and doing battle with the assorted weirdos is great fun! The graphics, although blocky, are full of character, and the animation is great. UM's moves are limited, but there are some really whacky custom ones to try out, including the the 'ear twister' and 'nut crusher' – the results of which are hilarious. The moves change from level to level, making things more varied, and there are some amazing street hasslers later on. Street Hassle **is a beat 'em up with its tongue firmly planted in cheek, and comes thoroughly recommended.**



Street Hassle **isn't really anything special. Beat 'em ups have been around for a long time, but I found myself instantly hooked on this game. Some of the moves your hero uses to beat merry hell out of his opponents are incredibly funny, and have to be seen to be believed. Maybe I'm a closet hooligan, but I really enjoyed beating up all and sundry, especially the granny. I have doubts as to its long term lastability, but for the moment,** Street Hassle **will do nicely, thank you.**



It's 'Odd Game of the Month' award time again, folks. And the winner is . . . well, you know the routine. Street Hassle **has got to be THE weirdest beat 'em up ever – to the point of self-ridicule. It's also bordering on the sick, as it involves beating up blind men and whirling grannies around the screen. Still, it must appeal to some basic instinct, since it's actually quite good fun. The graphics and sound are nothing to shout about, although the characters are large and quite effective. A little difficult to control perhaps, but enjoyable nonetheless. If you're tired with all that Oriental good-mannered rubbish, take a look at** Street Hassle.

PRESENTATION 82%
Plenty of options and a good screen layout.

GRAPHICS 77%
Large and humourous cartoon-like characters and great backdrops.

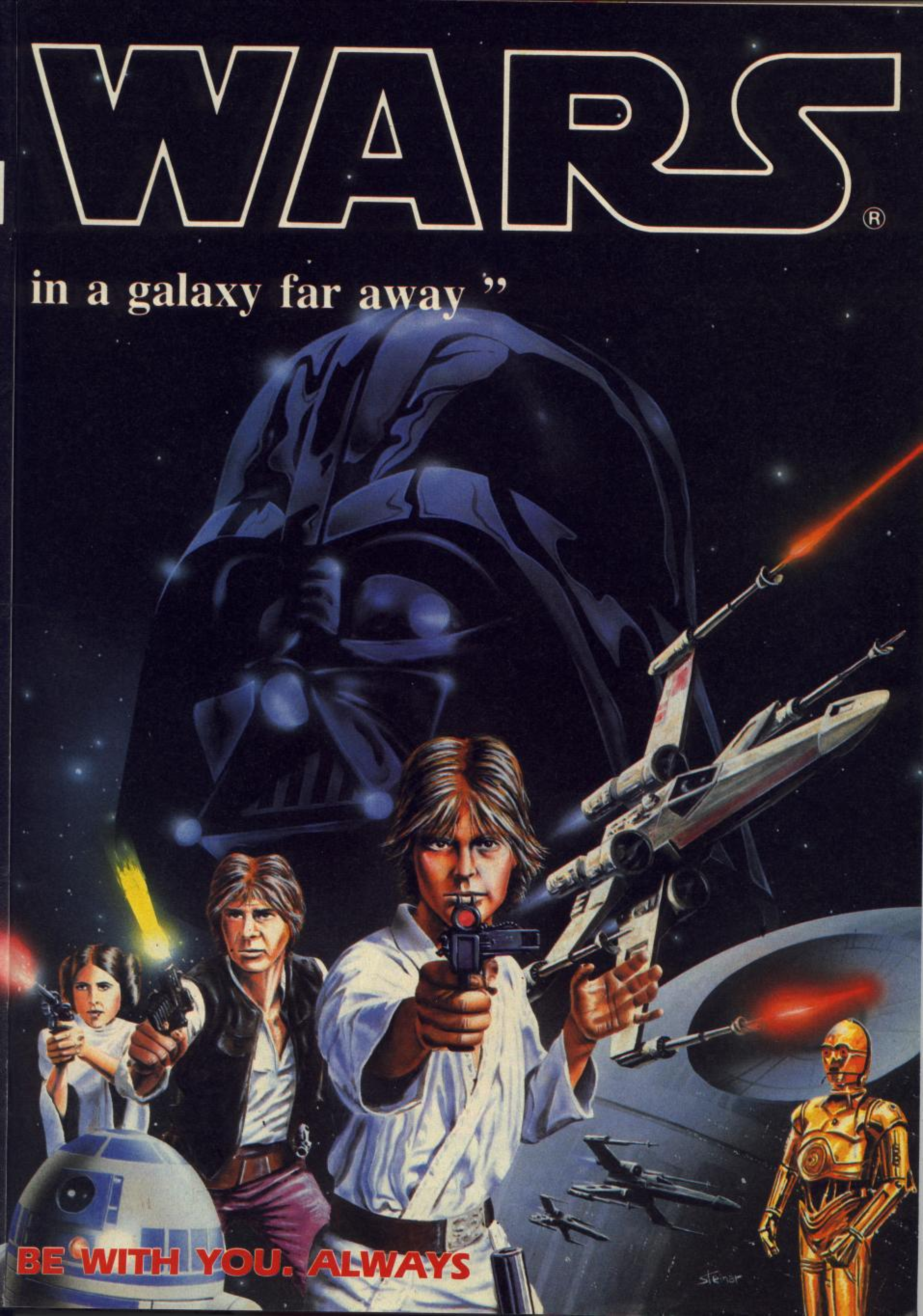
SOUND 61%
Suitable effects, and an odd tune.

HOOKABILITY 83%
The violent nature of the game is worryingly addictive.

LASTABILITY 67%
Enough in it to keep a hardened beat em up fan amused for some time.

OVERALL 80%
A extremely strange but enjoyable beat 'em up.


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At last! The most famous coin-op Arcade Game and one of the most successful films of our era come together in this Domark publication.
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REAL ARCADE ACTION AT ITS BEST!

The year is 2379: Earth's vast resources are finally running out (again!). You must bridge the path to the much needed matter supplies, using three ZMX all-purpose battle-droids to link up the vital cosmic-interlace grid.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Full 3D smooth scrolling action
- 37 different landscapes
- Bonus levels, teleport pods and enemy generators
- Graphics by Pete James
- Sound FX by Tony Crowther.

STARLIGHT SOFTWARE

C64/128 cass £9.99 C64/128 disk £12.99 AMSTRAD cass £9.99 AMSTRAD disk £14.99 SPECTRUM £8.99

MARKETED BY ARIOLASOFT



IMPLOSION

Cascade, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

An artificial planet is on a direct course with Earth. At its heart is a white dwarf star, and the resultant collision with our planet would be catastrophic. Only one course of action remains – to send a fleet of three attack craft to penetrate its defences and initiate its implosion.

The planet is protected by a series of energy spheres connected together to form a grid. Seven of these pure energy structures need to be eliminated before the planet's vulnerable Trench system is breached.

To destroy each protective grid, all the linking energy spheres are eliminated by repeated blasting. When all the spheres are destroyed, the entire grid begins to collapse, and a Portal to the next level is located and entered within the ten seconds to complete the destruction sequence. If entry is successful, the next level is loaded from tape or disk.

Throughout the mission, alien defence ships attack, draining the spacecraft's energy. Contact with the grid or failing to secure a level within the time limit also causes a loss of energy.

Energy crystal stores are located around the grid and release four energy crystals when destroyed. These are collected to give extra lives, energy or points.

On the final level, giant power centres are destroyed to cause the final collapse of the impending threat – and Earth is saved!



The main problem I can see with Implosion **is that the game structure tends toward the simplistic side. It appears that the technical aspects were tackled first, and then a game bolted on to the high speed scroller and clever grid system. One really annoying aspect is the incessant alien attack waves which constantly buzz around your ship like angry bees. These are difficult to shoot, since the ship is unwieldy and can't fire while attempting to turn.** Implosion **is fast and plays quite well, but it boils down to being a very straightforward shoot 'em up, which simply isn't enough to justify its price.**



At first glance, Implosion **looks good. The super-fast smooth scrolling graphics are very impressive, and there are some great tunes and sound effects. However, those favourable first impressions dwindle when you start playing. The gameplay is very simplistic and not at all challenging. There's little to do other than blast the links and avoid alien attacks. Collecting the crystals would add a little variety to the action, but I found it far too risky pursuit to be worthwhile. It took only one session to reach level six, and since there are only eight levels I very much doubt** Implosion's **lasting appeal, especially as the game ends when all the levels have been completed. There just isn't enough depth to warrant the price tag.**

PRESENTATION 80%
Uncluttered screen display with a pretty title screen. Demo mode and trainer are also featured.

GRAPHICS 71%
Clear grid backdrops with fast and smooth scrolling. Nicely detailed main sprite, although the alien vessels are rather plain.

SOUND 73%
Lively title tune and end game jingles, and adequate spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 60%
The immediate blasting should appeal to most games players.

LASTABILITY 49%
The similarity of the levels and simplistic gameplay hardly make for an enduring pastime.

OVERALL 57%
A fast, graphically pleasing shoot 'em up which provides only a moderate challenge.

SUPER SPRINT

Electric Dreams, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

The popular Atari two-player racing game has at last arrived on the Commodore 64, courtesy of Electric Dreams.

At the start, a one or two player game is chosen. The former pits a solo driver against two computer controlled 'drone' cars, while the latter is a head-to-head race, with the option to include a drone opponent.

Four circuits are available, each viewed from above and littered with hazards such as tornadoes and oil slicks (causing the cars to spin out of control), and water puddles (which slow the cars down). When racing round the track, the players have to use ramps to jump gaps in the circuit, negotiate moving gates and take short cuts in an attempt to finish first.

Colliding with the side barriers at a slow speed stops the car temporarily, while high speed smashes require a replacement car, flown in by a helicopter.

Bonus spanners appear regularly, and are automatically collected when driven over. Collect three and an extra feature is added to the car, either super traction, turbo acceleration, higher top speed or increased scoring.

If the drone car finishes first, the game ends. Otherwise the track selection screen reappears, with any completed circuits bearing a flag in the appropriate winner's colours. When all four tracks have been completed, a fresh set are loaded in for the competition to continue.



Okay, so the arcade version is the bees knees, but this version is just awful. Graphically, the game is tremendous: all of the tracks are beautifully presented, and the cars are small and neat. The control is a little slow to react, but bearable. So, what's the matter with it? In a word – bugs, and plenty of them. Cars can be driven off ramps onto the track below, players who haven't collected any spanners are allowed to customise their cars and at one point, both cars exploded, the helicopter froze above the track and the drone car, oblivious to all the excitement, went on to win the race. If only Super Sprint **had been properly playtested – it could have been great . . .**



I love the original – it's really competitive and playable. The Commodore 64 looks very similar, but unfortunately frequent bugs ruin the enjoyment. Yes, Super Sprint **is badly bugged – something you don't expect to find in a full priced game. Sometimes the helicopter freezes before it drops a new car on the track (effectively ending the game), and at other times cars glitch terribly, exploding or disappearing and reappearing on another section of the track.** Super Sprint **could have been brilliant, but it's fallen far short of its potential.**

PRESENTATION 72%
Clear and concise instructions with faithful presentation on screen.

GRAPHICS 82%
Small but adequate car sprites, with some beautifully rendered track layouts.

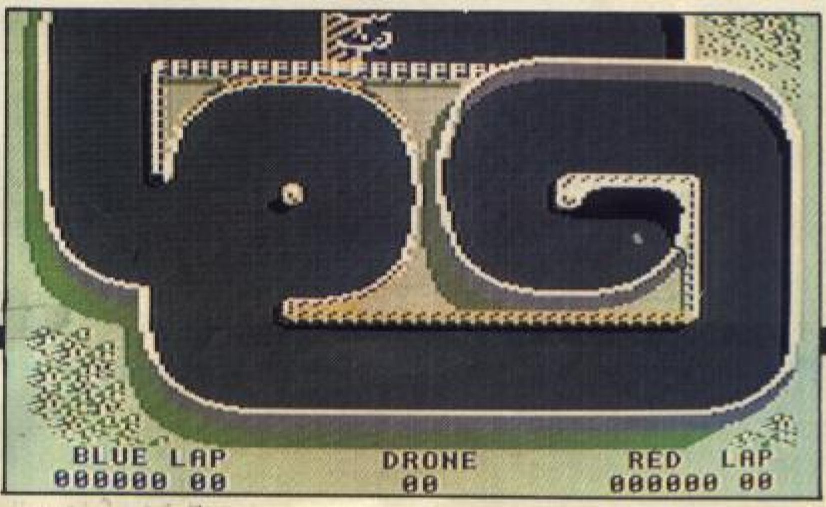
SOUND 31%
The grating soundtrack repeats every ten seconds, and the effects are similarly forgettable.

HOOKABILITY 61%
Easy to get into, but bugs swiftly mar the enjoyment.

LASTABILITY 45%
The two player option is fun, if you can stand the bugs.

OVERALL 58%
An annoyingly and unnecessarily flawed arcade conversion.

▶ One of the many circuits awaiting the burnt rubber treatment





ZZAP! TEST

BUGGY BOY

Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only

● Incredibly compulsive and exciting racing action from Elite



Buggy Boy is Elite's officially licensed conversion of Tatsumi's off-road arcade race game.

In keeping with other games of this genre, the player simply has to race between two points on a circuit within a set time, avoiding hazards along the way.

At the start, one of five courses is chosen: Offroad, North, South, East or West. Each course is split into five different sections which are raced against the clock. When the selection has been made, the race begins.

The player's view of the proceedings follows the convention of being from behind and above, with the buggy displayed in the centre of the screen. The two-speed car follows the twisting course, and steers left and right to avoid hazards, including trees, boards, rocks, water, lamposts and walls. Hitting any of these stalls the vehicle, and precious time is wasted as it's restarted.

In addition to the normal driving mode, the car also jumps when it

Who says the racing genre is dead? Buggy Boy **proves that the racing format is very much alive and kicking. It's rare that a computer game manages to give a real feeling of thrill and exhileration, but** Buggy Boy **manages it! The graphics are absolutely superb – I've never seen such a smooth and realistic 3D effect, and the 'feel' of the control method is tremendous. The buggy responds in exactly the way you wish, and that makes for some really involving and exciting racing. There are five different tracks to race, varying from the relatively easy Offroad, to the mean East. Each one has its own distinct character and requires a different approach to complete it. On Offroad you can burn along and go for bonus flags, but the hazard-filled South track requires some dextral driving. What I like most of all is that** Buggy Boy **remains totally addictive even when the courses have been completed. It's not only the feeling that you can better your top score, but there's something in the gameplay that makes it enjoyable to play time and time again. Brilliant stuff Elite, how about a** Buggy Boy II**?**

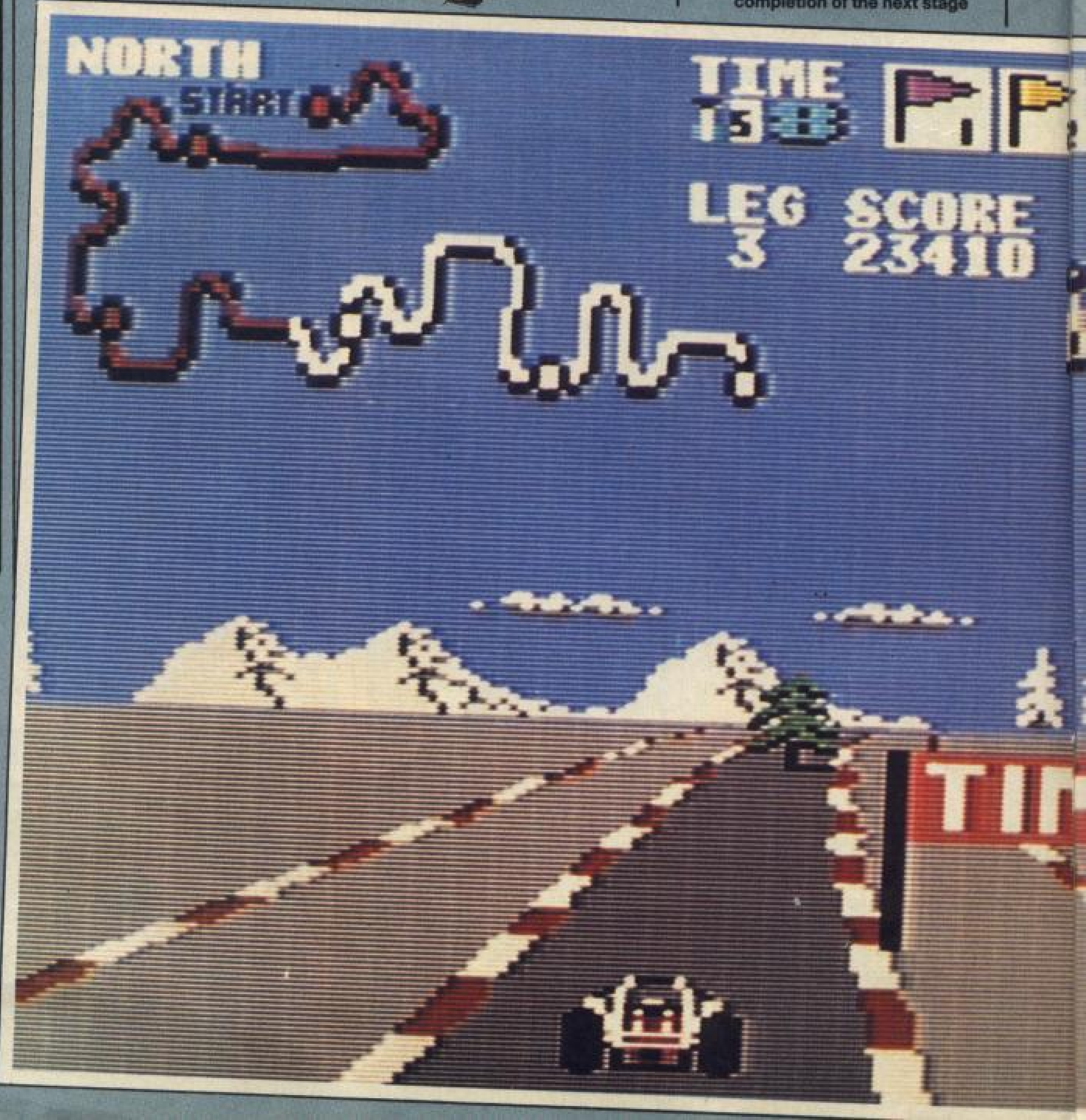


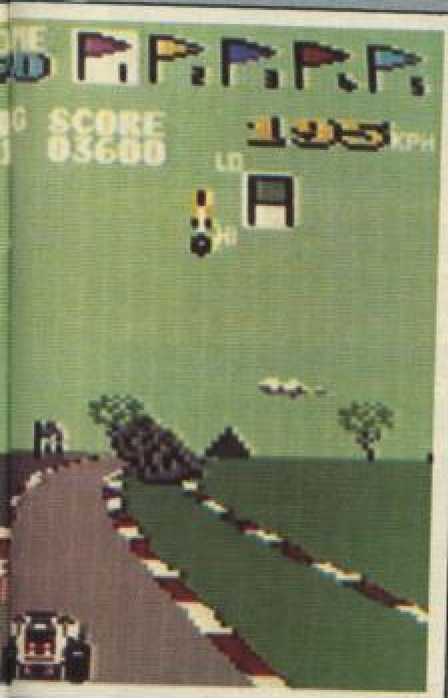
There are two things that set Buggy Boy **apart from other games of this type: the use of graphics and the control method. Others may look better but none are so effective** (Super Cycle **included), and no other game feels so good. The buggy is very responsive and goes exactly where you want it to, creating a perfect feeling of involvement: you get totally wrapped up in the proceedings. The speed of the action is a high contributing factor and the variety between levels really makes it a lasting proposition. There are racing games and racing games – but there's only one** Buggy Boy!





► **Collecting the time bonus allows a longer period for completion of the next stage**



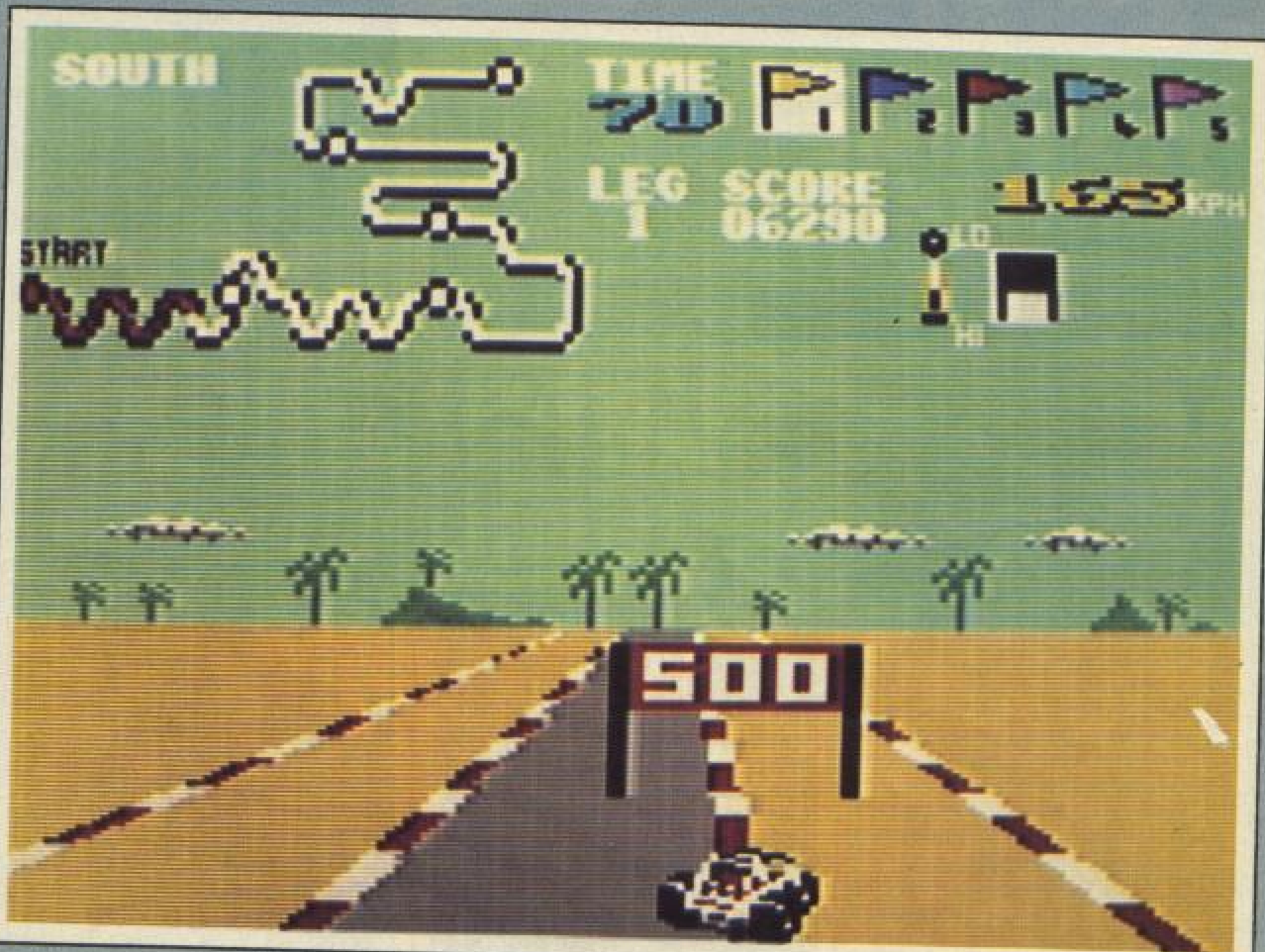


► To get the purple flag, Buggy Boy has to ride the ramp to the left of the track

hits logs, and runs along on two wheels when it touches stones or tree stumps. These extra abilities come in useful when avoiding hazards. As well as dodging the dangerous obstacles at break-neck speed, the player also runs over bonus flags for extra points, and steers through bonus point and time gates.

On completion of a stage, extra time is added to the total, and the player continues on the next section of the course. Any time bonuses collected plus the time remaining from the previous stage are added to that allowed for completion of the latter.

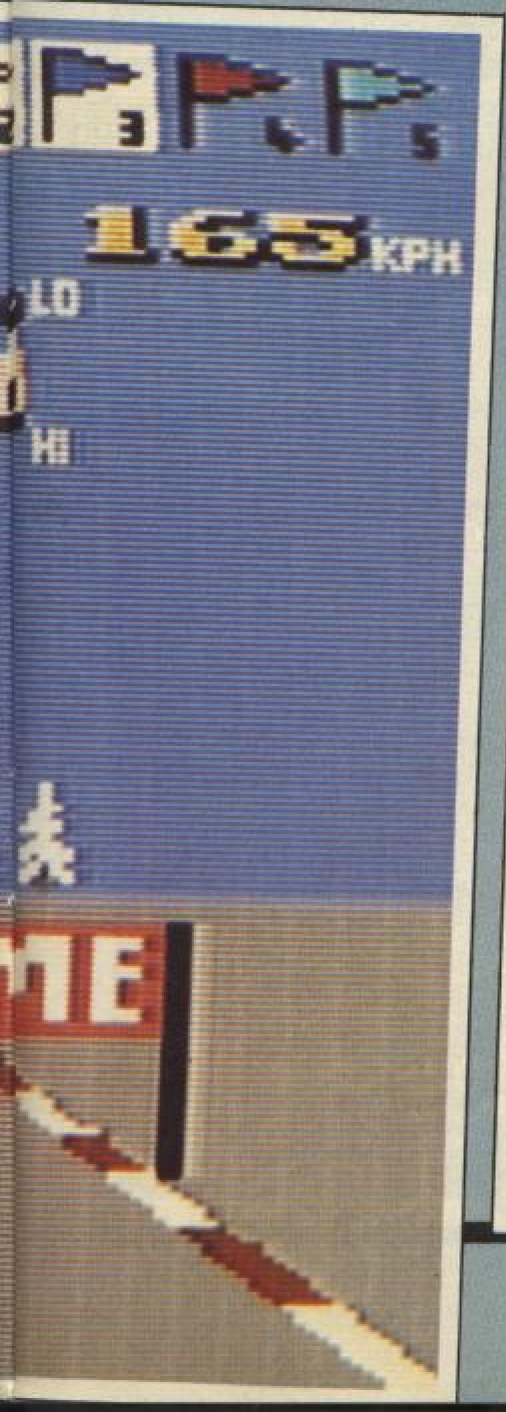
Later levels become increasingly harder, with more hazards to avoid, and banked bends, tunnels and bridges to test the player's driving abilities. A football is also occasionally encountered, and is driven into for extra points.

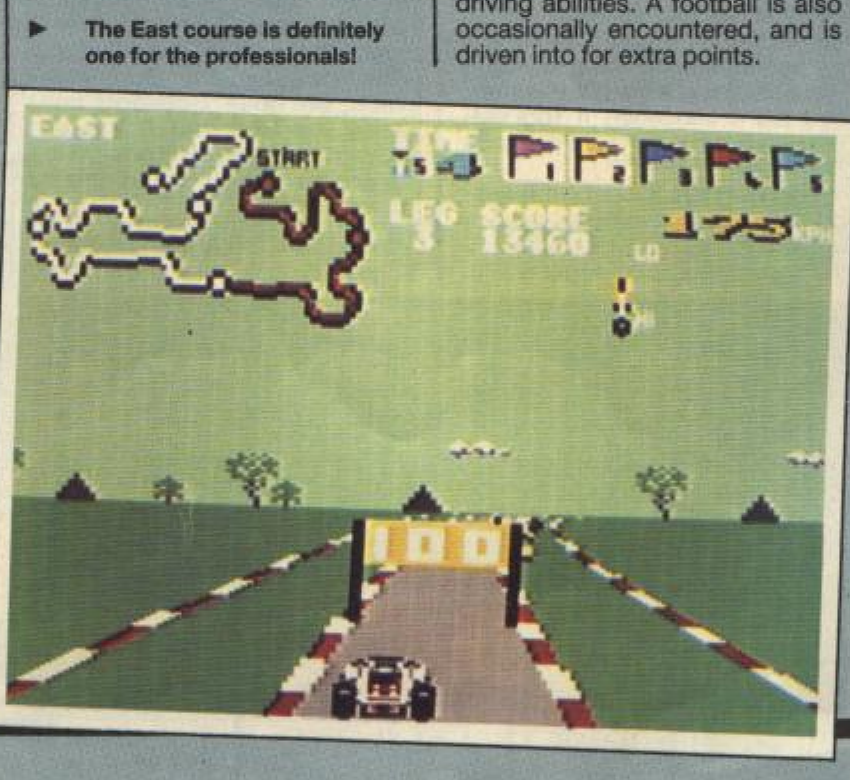


►Cam's buggy swerves to collect a 500 point bonus

The worst thing about this month was Buggy Boy – I had to stop playing it to write some reviews! If you think I'm joking, just try stopping once you've started. The designers have built the courses so cunningly, that hitting one too many obstacles means you coast to a stop a few agonizing inches from the finish line – and you have to try again just to see if you can get those extra seconds. On top of that, there are quick, clear graphics that are very reminiscent of the original, atmospheric sound effects, and masses of tracks – five courses, each with five stages should keep the best player going for days. Buggy Boy is a winner all the way. Buy it!







► The East course is definitely one for the professionals!

PRESENTATION 94%
Includes a selection of courses and the overall look is slick.

GRAPHICS 91%
The somewhat chunky graphics are completely offset by the speed at which they move: ultimately very effective.

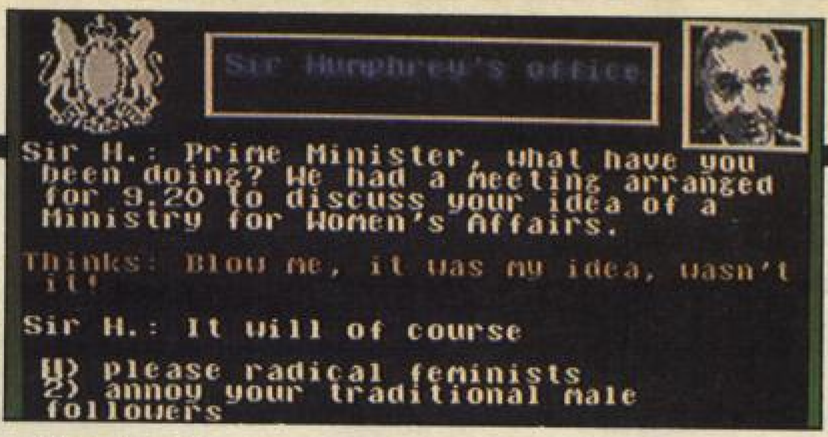
SOUND 68%
Not the best ever, with little in the way of music, but enough spot effects to add a suitable atmosphere.

HOOKABILITY 97%
Pick up the joystick at your peril – and make sure you've got the next day free.

LASTABILITY 89%
Very hard to beat the toughest course, but great fun while you're trying.

OVERALL 97%
A cracking racing game that proves totally compulsive.

WHIZZZZZ!



YES PRIME MINISTER

Mosaic Publishing, £14.95 cass, £19.95 disk, joystick or keys

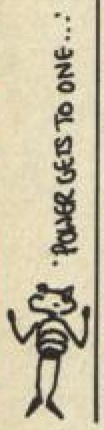
Yes Prime Minister closely follows the popular television comedy programme, and takes the player through a typical working week of the right honourable Jim Hacker PM. During this time he or she has to successfully negotiate the pitfalls and hazards of the country's political machinery.

The main screen contains a view of the interior of Jim's office. All the usual trappings of a major political power are there. Accessing these items is achieved via a floating cursor. Clicking the fire button over the selected equipment accesses another screen, where the desired information is displayed.

The game starts on the morning of Monday, April 1st. Checking the left hand drawer of the desk shows a list of the appointments that Jim has to attend during the course of the day. It's up to the player to keep a check on the time, and go to the appropriate rooms at the correct hour by accessing the door.

Having arrived punctually for an appointment, the player takes part in the meeting, which usually involves a discussion with Sir Humphrey Appleby, Bernard Wooley and a specified guest. After a resumé of the particular problem, the PM instructs his minions by selecting orders from a list of possible dialogue. Choosing the correct response allows the meeting to continue, and also increases the PM's poll rating.

The game is played over five working days, each of which is loaded and played separately. At the end of the week, the PM has a final discussion with Sir Humphrey and Bernard, who pass judgement on the player's attempt at steering the country.





After playing Yes Prime Minister **through to completion, I was reasonably satisfied with it. The game plays quite well, and makes a good attempt at capturing the atmosphere of the TV show (thanks to the professional script-writing). Unfortunately, the action is identical on subsequent plays, and after a couple of goes it will probably be relegated to the dustiest reaches of the software cupboard. Personally, I think Mosaic have one hell of a cheek to charge £15 for a game that provides, at the very most, a week's play.**



Initially, Yes Prime Minister **is playable and extremely witty, but the problems don't change from game to game, and it doesn't take long to guess the correct answers. The text does make you smile the first few times you play, as the 'script' is very similar to the original TV series, but unfortunately the jokes wear thin once they've been endured a couple of times. The £15 price tag is far too high for a game which offers such limited entertainment.**

PRESENTATION 67%
The icon-driven control is easy to use, and the text and general on-screen appearance is good.

GRAPHICS 57%
Bland background, but neat digitised caricatures.

SOUND 45%
Limited, but competent spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 72%
Easy to play, and the jokes amuse.

LASTABILITY 28%
As there are very few random events, the game becomes predictable after a couple of plays.

OVERALL 38%
An amusing but overpriced political romp, which loses its appeal alarmingly quickly.

YOGI BEAR

Piranha Software, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only.

Poor old Yogi Bear! His lifelong pal Boo-Boo has fallen into the clutches of a greedy hunter who intends to sell him to a circus.

Boo-Boo is locked in a cage on the far side of Jellystone National Park, and Yogi makes his way across the horizontally scrolling landscape to find his diminutive buddy.

In front of the cage are a series of stepping stones which have to be crossed in the right order to reach the key. If the wrong stone is stepped on, the hunter is alerted and Yogi gets captured as well, losing one of his five lives.

Boo-Boo has left a trail of toffee apples around the park, each one containing a part of the stepping stone sequence. If Yogi collects them all he can safely release Boo-Boo.

Yogi wanders the park in search of the clues, avoiding snakes, frogs, vultures, irate campers and the park custodian, Ranger Smith. A touch from any of these reduces Yogi's energy, which shrinks towards a fatal zero. There are also rivers and holes which have to be avoided, or another life is lost.

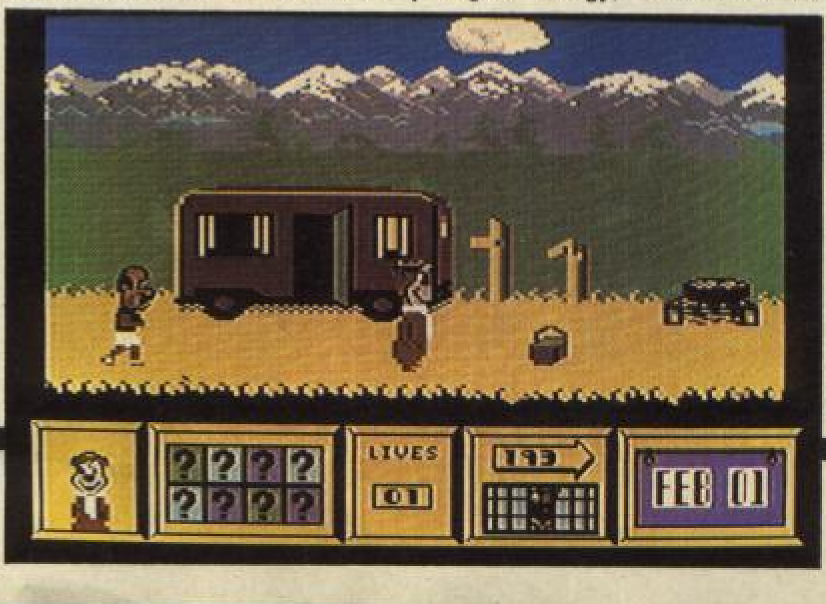
A network of caves around the park is used to skip from one part of the landscape to another, but careful planning is required lest Yogi misses a Toffee apple. Yogi starts his journey on January 1st and has until the hibernating season to rescue his chum.



I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the characters in Yogi Bear. **Yogi himself is wonderfully drawn, although the animation is rather poor – especially when he jumps (don't blink or you'll miss it). The landscape itself is very colourful and has a nice cartoon-quality feel to it. The game, however, is not terribly inspiring, being of a simple run and collect nature. The precision needed to negotiate many of the hazards is annoying, and some of the campers are awfully difficult to shake off. Nevertheless, it is fun and mappers and explorers should enjoy what** Yogi Bear **has to offer.**



Piranha have consistently made good jobs of their licensed games, and Yogi Bear **continues the trend. The gameplay tends towards the simplistic side, but is mildly addictive. The graphics are great, and although the backdrops are a little gaudy, they capture the spirit of the cartoon nicely. Working out the correct route takes plenty of perseverence, and a little cartography is definitely required. The novelty will doubtless wear off once Boo-Boo has been rescued, but if arcade adventures are you forte,** Yogi Bear **provides sufficient entertainment.**



PRESENTATION 57%
A rather fiddly control method, and few options.

GRAPHICS 68%
Smart cartoon-like backdrops, with decent main character sprites.

SOUND 72%
Jolly main theme with some very good jingles.

HOOKABILITY 64%
The precision needed to negotiate the first few obstacles is initially quite annoying, but thereafter forewarned is forearmed.

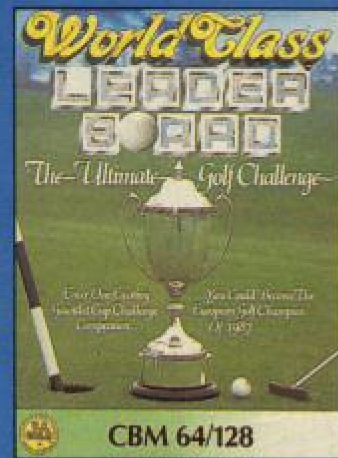
LASTABILITY 51%
Jellystone Park is large and should provide a fair challenge – until completion.

OVERALL 61%
Not what you might expect from such a strong title, but a pleasant and playable arcade adventure.

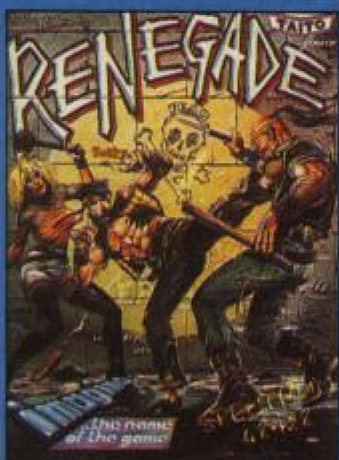
SEGA COMMODORE SPECTRUM

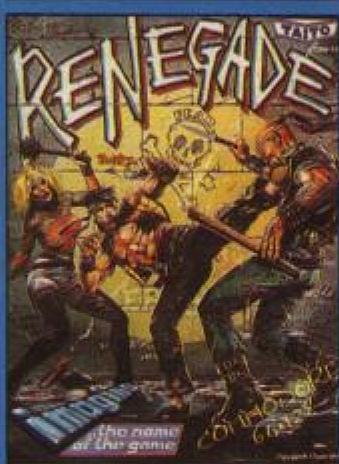


WOOLWORTHS TOP 30 COMPUTER SOFTWARE

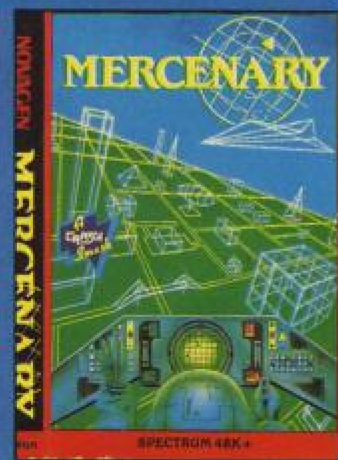


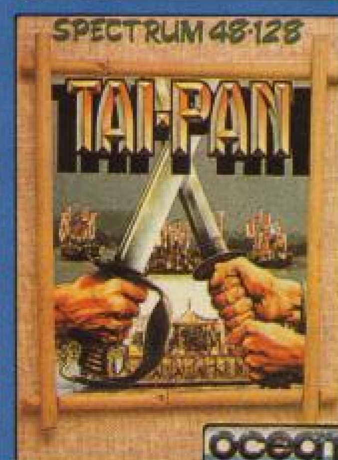
NOVEMBER 1987





POSITION	TITLE	SOFTWARE HOUSE	MACHINE TYPE	PRICE
1.	Indiana Jones	U.S. Gold	Spectrum	8.99
2.	World Class Leaderboard	U.S. Gold	C64	9.99
3.	Renegade	Imagine	Spectrum	7.95
4.	Mercenary	Novagen	Spectrum	9.95
5.	Renegade	Imagine	C64	8.95
6.	Tai Pan	Ocean	Spectrum	7.99
7.	Bubble Bobble	Firebird	Spectrum	8.95
8.	World Class Leaderboard	U.S. Gold	Spectrum	8.99
9.	Exolon	Hewson	Spectrum	7.99
10.	Super Sprint	Activision	C64	9.99
11.	Last Ninja	System 3	C64	9.99
12.	Indiana Jones	U.S. Gold	C64	9.99
13.	Mega Apocalypse	Martech	C64	8.95
14.	Tai Pan	Ocean	C64	8.95
15.	Bubble Bobble	Firebird	C64	8.95
16.	Solomon's Key	U.S. Gold	C64	9.99
17.	Epyx Epics	U.S. Gold	C64	9.99
18.	Barbarians	Palace	Spectrum	9.99
19.	Road Runner	U.S. Gold	Spectrum	9.99
20.	Summer Gold	U.S. Gold	Spectrum	9.99
21.	Computer Hits 4	Beau Jolly	Spectrum	9.95
22.	Road Runner	U.S. Gold	C64	9.99
23.	Super Sprint	Activision	Spectrum	9.99
24.	Living Daylights	Domark	Spectrum	9.95
25.	Summer Gold	U.S. Gold	C64	9.99
26.	Xecutor	Edge	Spectrum	7.99
27.	Sidewize	Firebird	Spectrum	9.99
28.	Ace 2	Cascade	C64	9.99
29.	Renegade	Imagine	Amstrad	8.95
30.	Enduro Racer	Activision	Spectrum	9.99





SEGA



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MASTERTRONIC

WOOLWORTHS

A Great Deal in Entertainment

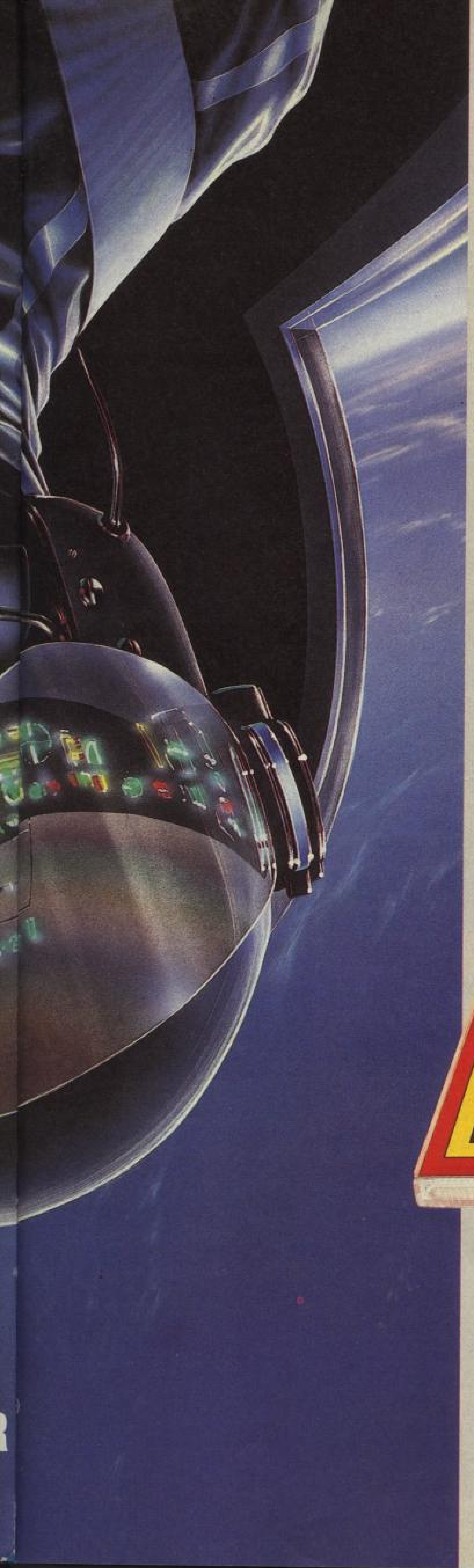
FIREBIRD

SEGA SEGA

* At selected larger stores.
* Items subject to availability

COMMODORE SPECTRUM SEGA


STATE OF THE ART
EGA
ART OF THE STATES
CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER

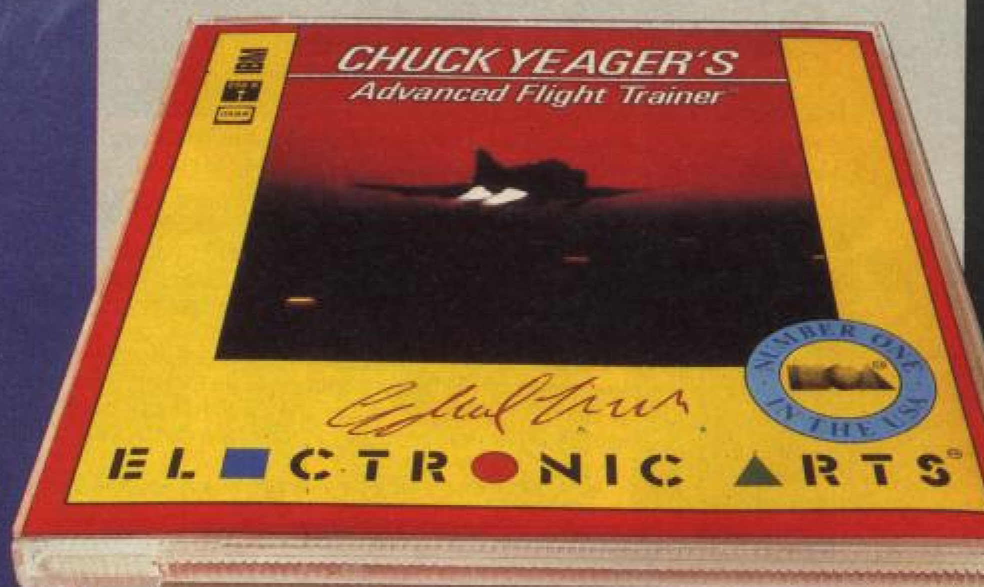


The instinct to survive. Out of control, screaming towards Earth at Mach 3, just 8 seconds and 20,000 ft left! Fly aileron rolls, Cuban 8's, even hammerhead stalls. Simulation so realistic you may just blackout. Remember – test pilots are only wrong once.

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ACTION FORCE

Virgin Games, £9.95 cassette, joystick only

The small island of Botsneda has recently been attacked by the evil forces of COBRA. As the inhabitants retreated, they left vital classified information which would cause great embarrassment and a substantial breach of security if found by the enemy. It is now down to the Action Force team to recover this information as quickly as possible.

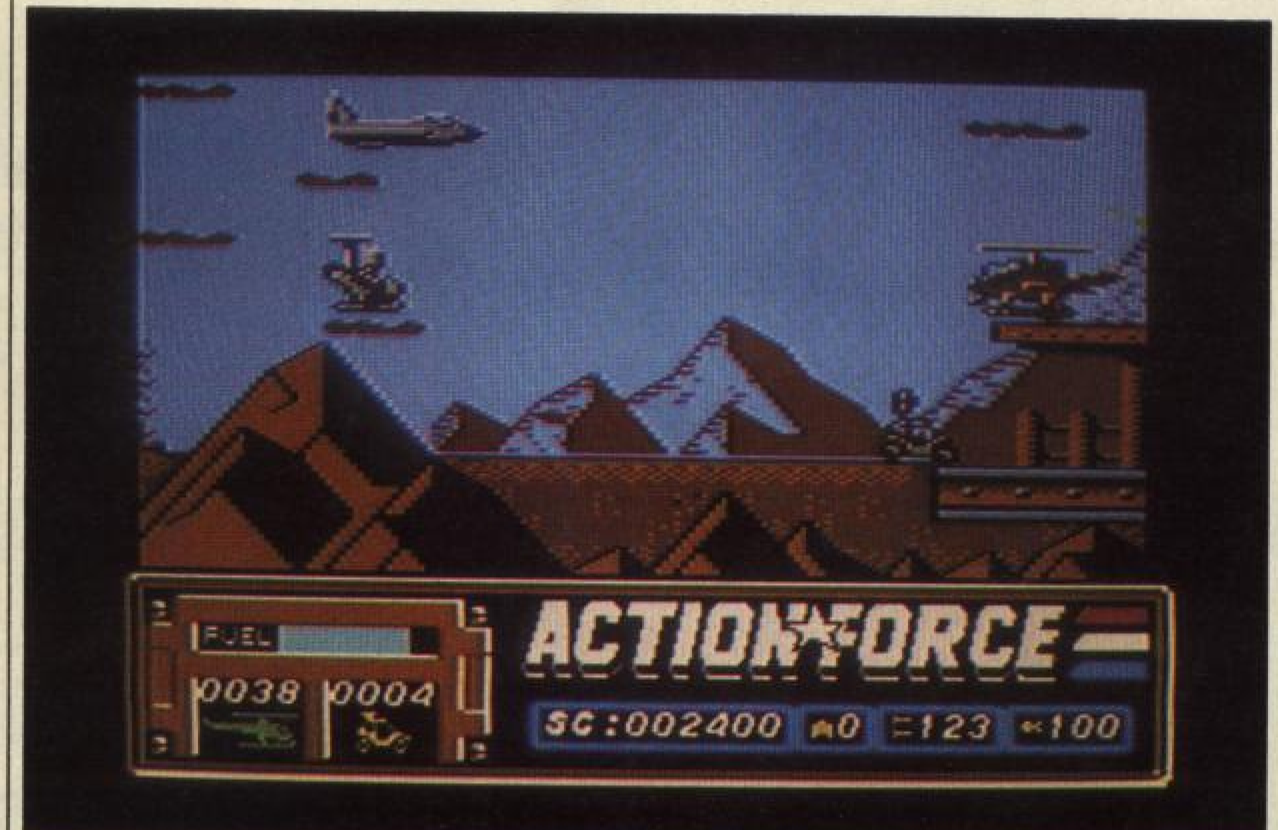
An All Weather and Environment (AWE) buggy is sent in to retrieve the secret data, and traverses the horizontally scrolling landscape from left to right. However, it has no defensive capabilities of its own and is therefore extremely prone to COBRA attacks. The player comes into the action as 'Wild Bill' in his 'Dragonfly' helicopter, who defends the AWE on its perilous journey.

Protecting the buggy involves subduing enemy aircraft. These zoom in and attack with either machine gun fire or bombs. An accurate hit reduces the buggy's 100 hit points, and bombs completely destroy it. At the same time, Wild Bill avoids being hit, as the Dragonfly is also susceptible to the same damage as the buggy, but has a buffer of 200 hit points instead.

After enemy attacks, the two major hazards are craters and walls, both of which destroy the buggy on contact. The former is countered by collecting bridging sections from other parts of the landscape and placing them over the holes. The latter is simply destroyed by blasting.

While flying across the war-torn landscape, Wild Bill avoids hitting solid objects, such as walls, refuelling points or the extreme left and right sides of the playing area, since collision with any of these result in instant death.

When the buggy reaches its destination (the extreme right hand of the landscape) a message is displayed and the action continues on the next level, where more hazards and enemy forces lie in wait. The mission ends when either the buggy or the Dragonfly are destroyed.

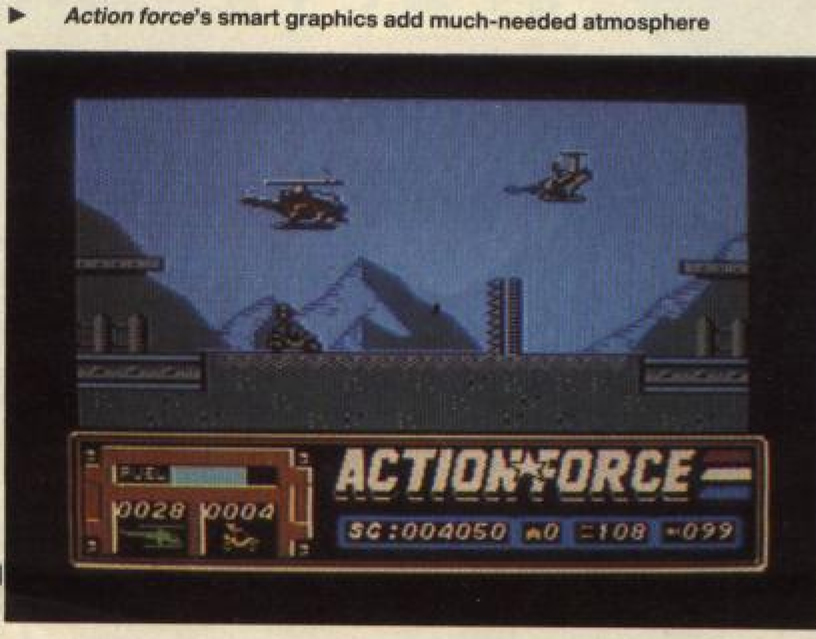


► **Wild Bill single handedly beats off the forces of COBRA while the AWE buggy trundles along, oblivious to the aerial mayhem**



At the moment it seems that every toy released on the market must be followed by a cartoon series and a computer game. The latest 'conversion', Action Force, is like its predecessors in that it maintains an amazing level of mediocrity. It's actually quite good fun when you first start playing – as are most shoot 'em ups – but there's nothing particularly innovative in the action. Once you've shot a dozen planes and filled in a couple of holes, you've seen all that's on offer. Playability is hindered by the difficulty in distinguishing solid objects from background, which obliges the player to explore by collision, and there's also a problem with the game difficulty: it increases hugely between the first and second levels. This is enough to deter the most fanatical games player from continuing.

► ***Action force*'s smart graphics add much-needed atmosphere**





If the accompanying blurb to Action Force hadn't mentioned the fact that it was a licence, I'd never have guessed. There is little here to link it with anything – least of all a line of childrens' toys. The idea (as with most Gang of Five games) is different, if not entirely original, but suffers from a lack of variety. The gameplay is hectic, with a good slice of blasting action, but things get overly difficult after the first screen. It's also annoying that the far edges of the screen kill, since in the heat of battle it's fairly easy to forget this and inadvertently terminate the game. Not a terrible effort, but lacking in imagination as much as anything.



It must be very difficult to make an interesting computer game from a series of plastic figures. Zoids succeeded because it utilised the great sci-fi story behind the toys. With Action Force there's very little to capitalise on – and it's ended up becoming an uninspired horizontally scrolling shoot and collect game. There's little else to do other than fetch and carry bits of bridge, dodge the enemy and wait between screens for the highly annoying and very slow messages to pass. The action is tricky, in fact it's almost too easy to die, but on the whole there's nothing to keep you coming back for more. The graphics and sound are very polished, but the gameplay just isn't interesting enough.

PRESENTATION 73%
Slick joystick control and extensive in-game instructions, but too much waiting between levels for text messages.

GRAPHICS 72%
Atmospheric, smooth scrolling backdrops, but otherwise lacklustre.

SOUND 55%
A lively intro tune, but simple game effects.

HOOKABILITY 71%
Simple to play, with enough instantly frenetic action to get you hooked.

LASTABILITY 43%
Little gameplay variation, and a ludicrously difficult second level.

OVERALL 60%
A bland shoot 'em up, with little to prompt recommendation.

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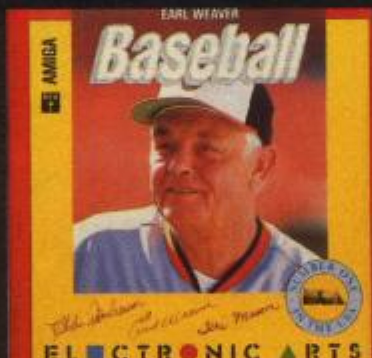
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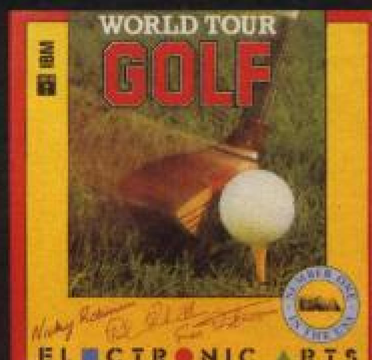
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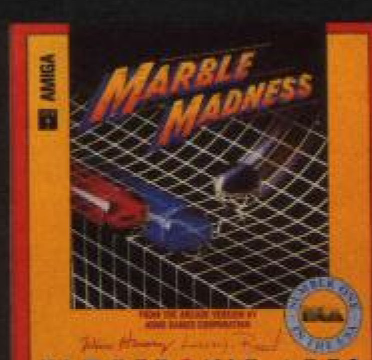
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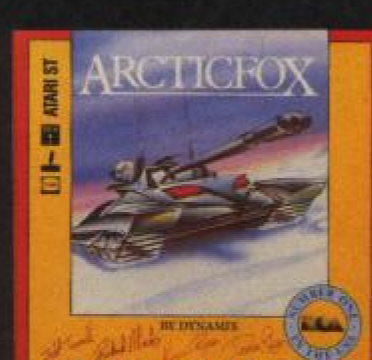
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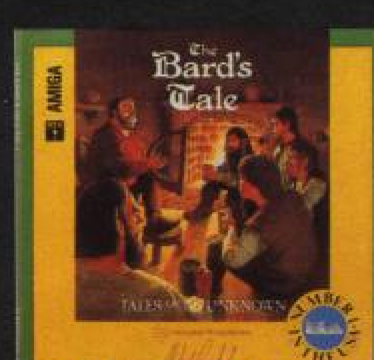
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SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT

Outlaw Productions, £14.95 cass, £19.95 disk, joystick or keys

● Create your own sizzlers with Sensible Software's SEUCK!

ZZAP! GOLD MEDAL AWARD

Sensible Software, whose previous successes include *Parallax* and *Wizball*, are set to take the vertically scrolling shoot 'em up market by storm with their *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit*, a utility which allows a person with absolutely no knowledge of BASIC or machine code to create their own stationary or vertically scrolling one or two player head-to-head blasting games.

The *SEUCK* allows all the variables of a shoot 'em up to be defined to suit the user's requirements. Sprites may be designed and animated, backdrops drawn, alien attack patterns set and even scoreline and bonuses fixed. A completed game may also be saved and played independently of the designer program.

Designing a game starts with the main menu. From here the user selects one of nine editable features: sprites, backgrounds, objects, sound effects, player limitations, attack waves and levels to the character set and front end. Choosing one of these results in a sub-menu appearing, which gives further options for the editor in operation.



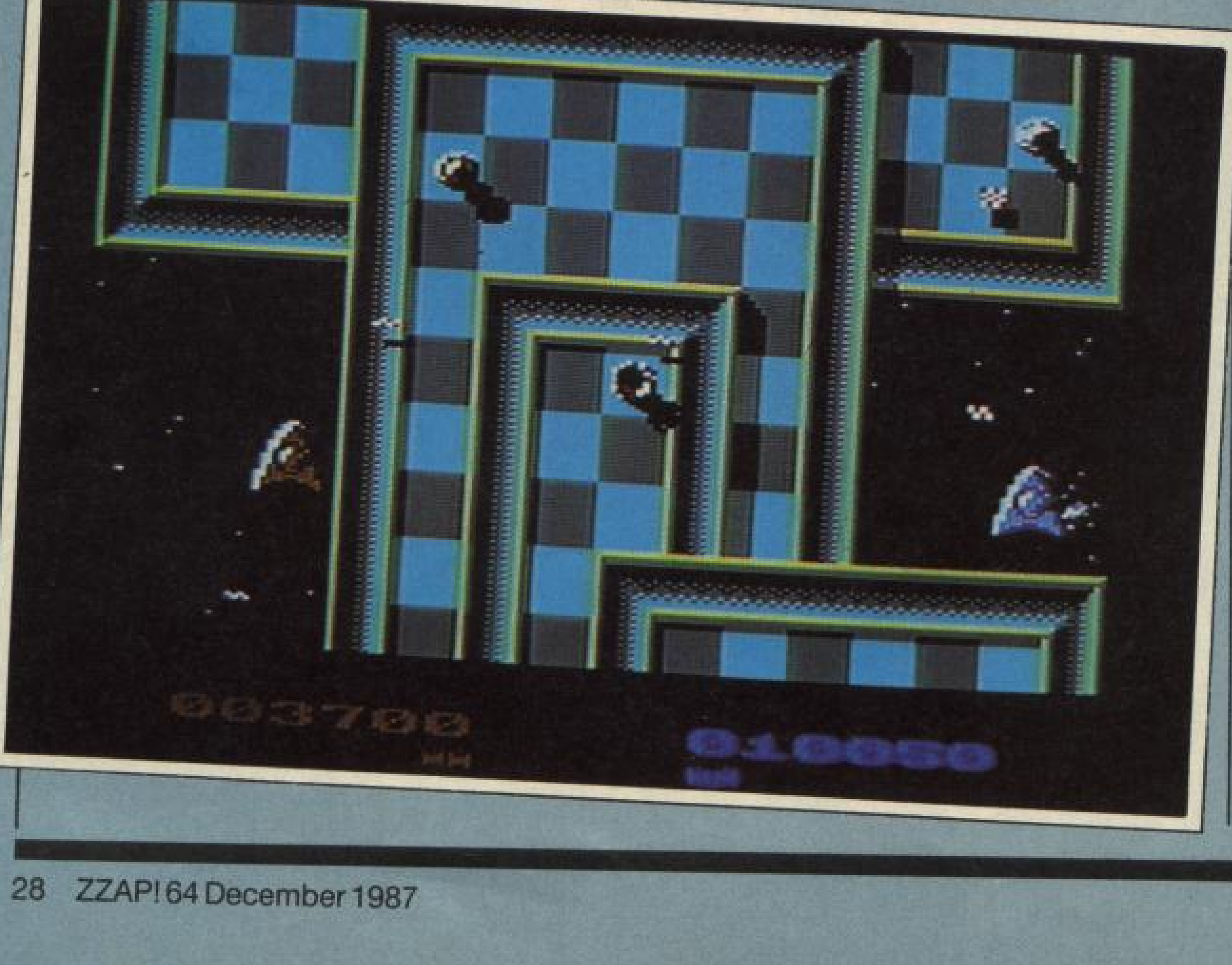
This has to be one of the greatest packages ever released on the 64. The games that come with it would be worth the money alone, but this gives you the ability to make your own. You've got an excellent sprite designer and graphics utility with features, such as slide and mirror, that are hard to find on some dedicated art packages! There's also a brilliant special effects mixer thrown in for good measure. All this is so compelling, I defy anyone not to become totally engrossed as soon as they start using it. It's beauty is that it enables literally ANYONE to produce high quality bashes of virtually infinite variation. The incredible feature of the package though, is that just when you think you've exhausted its resources, you find some other little trick it can do – such as the independent file saving. With people able to create high quality stand-alone games quickly and easily, it shouldn't be too long before we see the first SEUCK Sizzler or, dare I say it, Gold Medal!?



► The 'select block' mode, displaying the separate blocks available to create your scrolling map

For example, when the 'Edit Sprite' option is chosen, the screen prompts: select, edit, edit colour, slide, mirror, copy and erase. This comprehensive series of options allow up to 128 12x21 pixel sprites to be designed, coloured and animated. These may be saved out, or used immediately in the 'Edit Objects' mode which allows the animation to be defined and polished as required.

Backgrounds are designed and drawn in a similar fashion, with an extensive sub-menu allowing a char(acter) to be selected, edited and coloured, and all the chars to



► The *SEUCK* even allows two players to do battle on screen at the same time



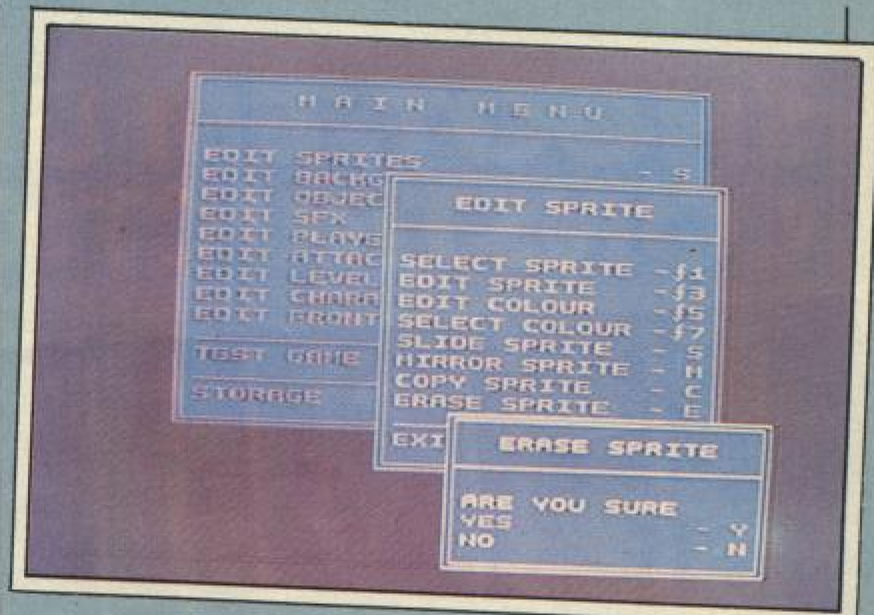




What a great idea! OK, it isn't the first, but it's certainly the best executed and most comprehensive (non-adventure) game designer to date. I couldn't believe how quickly and easily a simple game could be created. The whole package is brilliantly designed and so pleasant to use. The sprite designer alone is great fun and any aspiring Disneys will appreciate the animation facility. I won't say that SEUCK will be everyone's cup of tea: some people have neither the time, imagination or inclination to sit down and design their own games. And don't kid yourself – it does take time to create a really good game – but if you fancy designing your own Sizzler, then SEUCK is just what you've been looking for.

be put into blocks and used to create a very large scrolling map.

Once the backdrop and sprites have been prepared, the limitations of the player and enemy sprites are set. Here, the user defines the enemy attack patterns,



▼ Alien attack patterns are easily defined and stored in the program

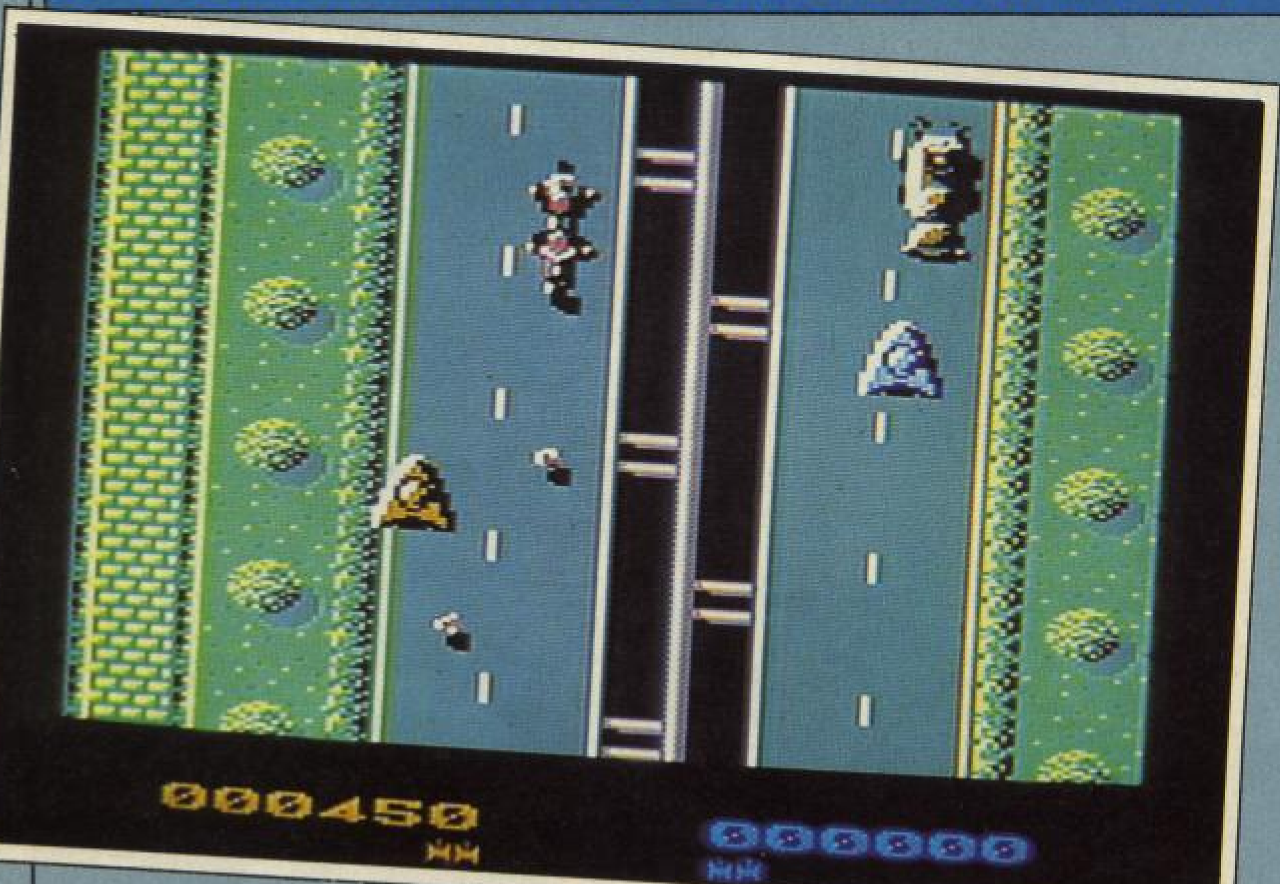


▼ Fancy a bit of *Slap 'n' Tickle*? It's free with the *SEUCK*





SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT



► More blasting chuckles with *Slap 'n' Tickle*

the level of their aggression and sets the players' movement.

The game may be split up into separate levels, the duration and type of which can be specified, including a static bonus screen at the end of each, if required.

To add to the atmosphere, some suitable spot effects may be created using the 'Edit Sound Effects' option. This sound generator is akin to a miniature mixing deck and allows up to 24 different sound effects to be generated by adjusting the on-screen slide controls. The wave, attack, pitch, plus speed and time of the rise and fall can be altered to create a wide variety of sounds, from soft gongs to raucous white noise blasts.

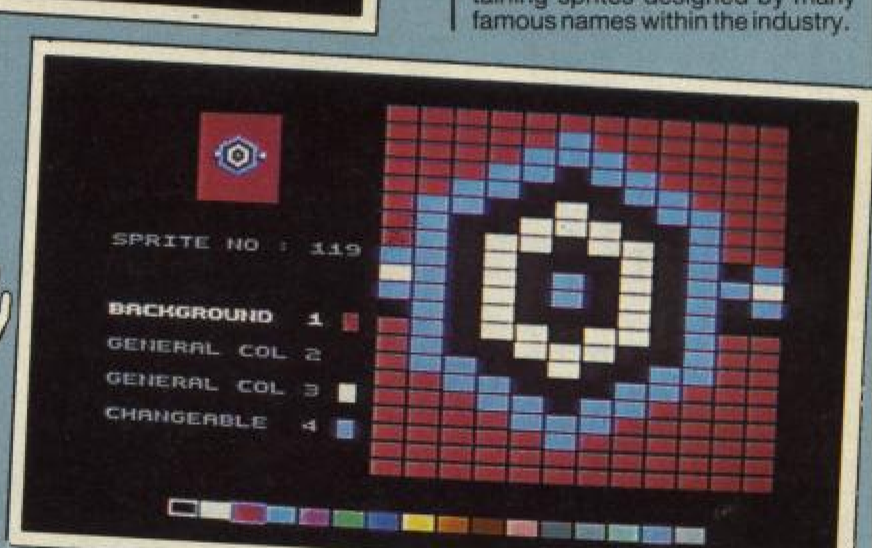
For the finishing touch, a title screen is also written and 'colour cycled' by selecting one of the 23 predetermined patterns. The character set may also be redesigned to give the game that final polished appearance.

As the creation process progresses and new features are implemented, the game may be playtested and tweaked as necessary. Finished games are then saved to tape or disk using the storage facility, and run as an independent program.

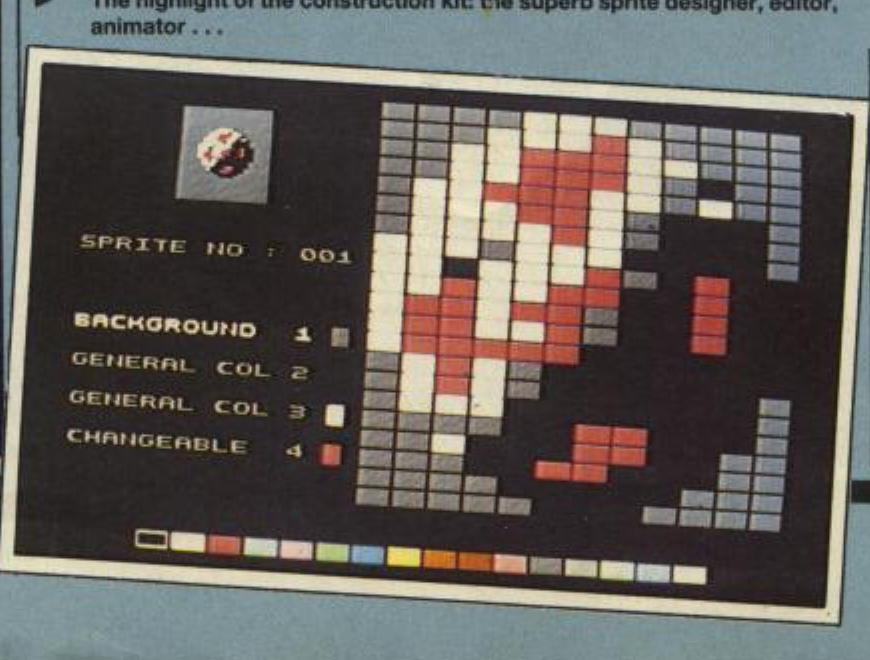
To show some of its capabilities, and give the user something to practice on, the package comes with four demo games: the cheekily named *Slap 'n' Tickle*, a variant on an Imagine licence, *Outlaw*, a *Gunsmoke* clone, *Transputer Man*, a *Robotron* game and *Celebrity Shoot 'Em Up*, a blaster containing sprites designed by many famous names within the industry.

Sensible Software have certainly come up with something special this time! If you've got the time and patience, you can use the SEUCK **to create some really incredible games. Earlier attempts at games designers have failed due to the lack of freedom.** SEUCK **gives the user an incredible amount of space in which to develop his ideas – it'll take a long time before someone manages to push it to its limits! The thought that has gone into its workings is absolutely phenomenal, so much so that you can sit down and start designing without reading the instructions – we did! You do have to refer to them eventually, and when you do they're helpful and informative. The package comes complete with a quartet of games, all of which are extremely good – in fact they're better than some full-priced games!** The Shoot 'em up Construction Kit **is a milestone in computing history. It mightn't appeal to all 64 owners, due to the amount of attention it requires, but if you've ever wished you could design your own game, this is a dream come true.**

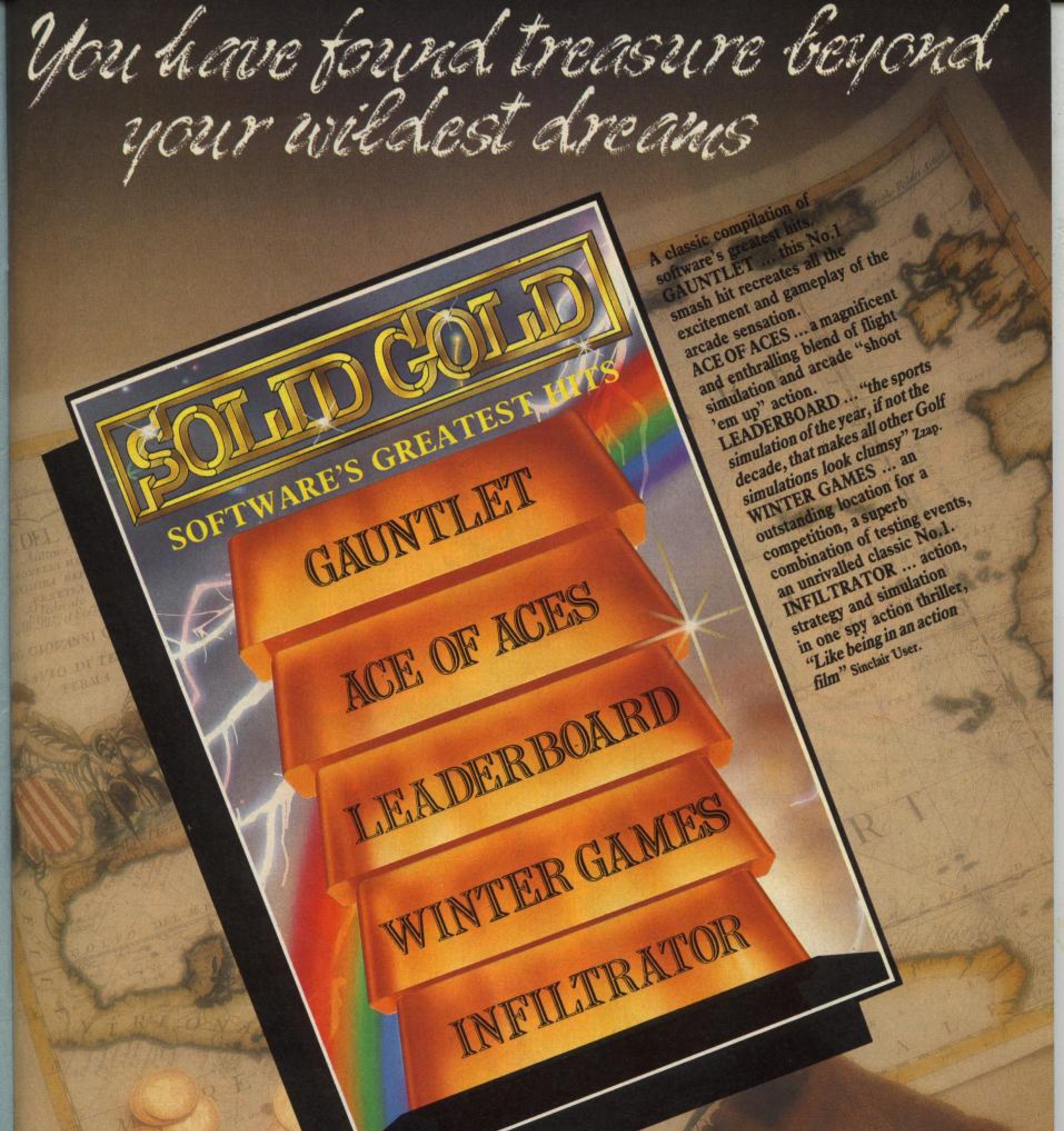




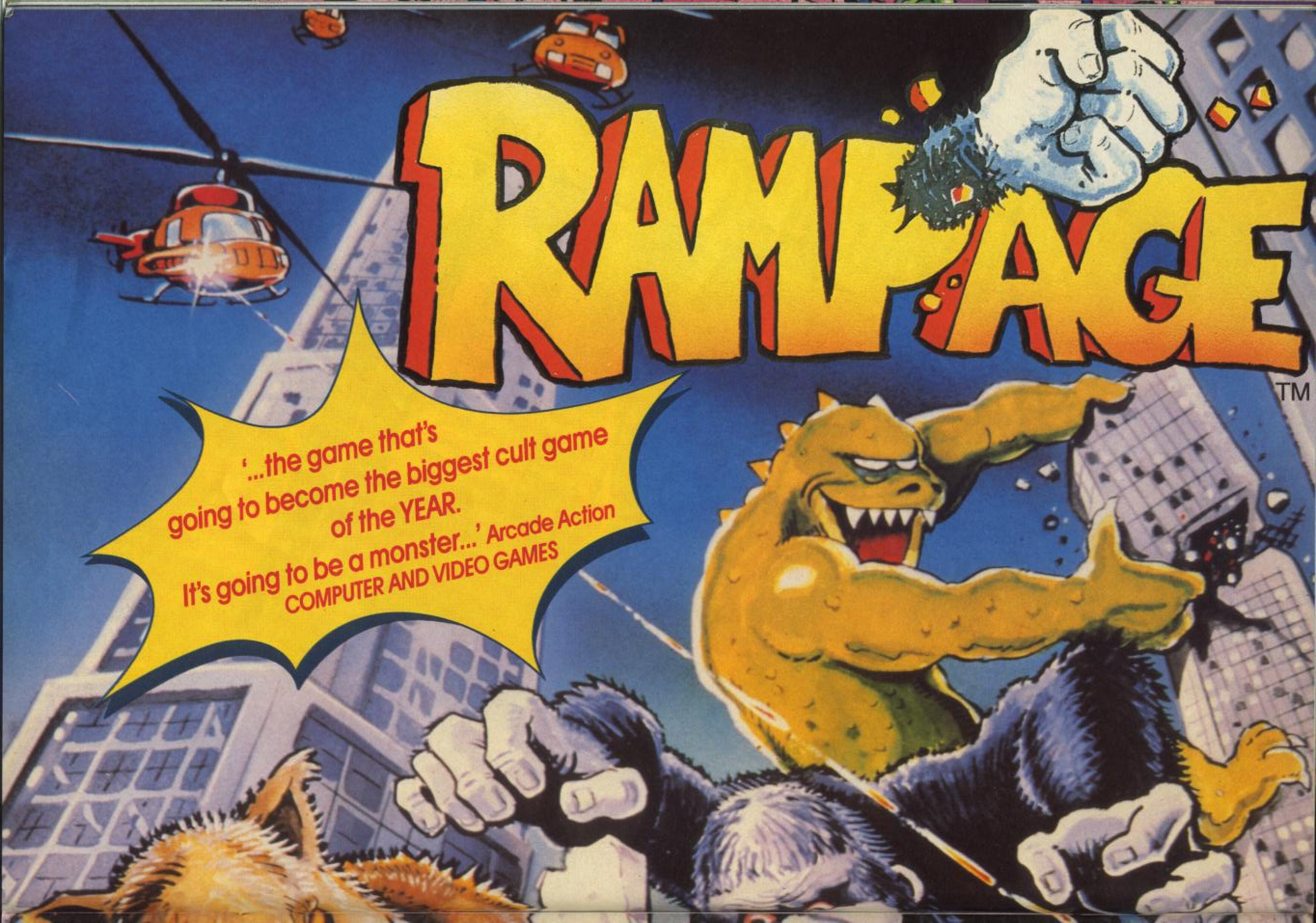
► The highlight of the construction kit: the superb sprite designer, editor, animator . . .



There's no doubt that **The Shoot 'em up Construction Kit** is an exceptional piece of software – the Gold Medal award is thoroughly deserved. However, since it's a class of its own we feel that it's unfair to compare it with other software on the market, and therefore there are no ratings. We have offered three individual opinions as a guideline, but ultimately it's up to you to decide whether or not you'd like to try and design your own games.



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ZZAP! RRAP

As I write storms are lashing us, London's been blown into Kent and Wales is about to deluge us with its overspill of flood water (Ludlow's River Teme rises in the Welsh hills); meanwhile, storms lash within the pages of Rrap as well. There's quite a bit here about budget games and their recent treatment in ZZAP! But more of that soon. First off, Letter Of The Month and that £30 worth of software for writing it, which goes to a person who remembers brown bread the way it used to be . . .

THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

Dear Lloyd
After reading Simon Calvert's Letter Of The Month (Issue 30), I felt I just had to write in.

I am totally fed up with this feeble 'software is too expensive so I copy it' attitude. What a load of absolute rubbish! I'm a games player of considerable experience, dating as far back as the early black-and-white *Pong* games, (does anybody remember those?!)

S Calvert states that he gets £6 per week: that's four pounds more than I got at his age. Around that time I was lucky enough to own an Atari 2600 games console. At the time it was considered state-of-the-art games playing technology but at what price? The machine itself cost nearly £200 and the games ranged from £20 to £50, which at the bottom of the range is double what you pay for software today. In those days there was no way of pirating games, so you either saved for the game you wanted, or went without.

At least today we have objective software review magazines to help you decide what is a good buy and what isn't. All we had then, was the Atari Club Newsletter which arrived when it felt like it, and was full of nothing but self-praise. So, if after months of saving, you bought a game only to find when you got it home it was total rubbish it was tough – there was nothing you could do about it, apart from start saving for something different.

Today there's such a wide range of software to choose from, not all good I must admit, but the good outweighs the bad. It has to, or the software industry would simply collapse. A few companies have already fallen by the wayside, but the majority of these were selling sub-standard software.

Today you know what you're buying before you part with your hard-earned cash. Just because games costs a tenner or isn't quite what you expected surely doesn't give you the right to pirate it. There is no excuse for pirating, in my opinion it is just down to personal greed and the attitude of wanting something for nothing.

Paul Coleman, Teddington

I agree, and Julian says he also used to have the same sort of thing when saving for ROM cartridges for his Atari 400. I too used to own an old Atari games console (cost a fortune, probably the equivalent in today's money of near on £350), and they, and the available games, were not aimed at adults with spending power, although inevitably it must have been adults buying them for their kids. It's all very well today's micro software pirates saying that was then and this is now – the nature of thieving never changes . . .

LM

ACRO AGGRO

Dear Lloyd
Please help me – I purchased a copy of the game *Acrojet*. This has always been on my list of essential purchases since reading your favourable review.

After loading the game I entered in the Pylon Race the first and easiest event. After becoming fairly proficient at flying around the course and making a couple of successful if rather shaky landings, I decided to progress to some of the other events.

Some chance! I went through all the options many times and had to reload until I could reload no more. I could not gain access to any other event.

The next day I sent the game back to US Gold. Three days later they returned my original game accompanied by a letter telling me that 'We no longer distribute this game, I suggest that you contact MicroProse', followed by MicroProse's address. Okay, try again.

Guess what. Yes, that's right! A similar parcel came back containing my game and a letter, and I quote: 'I am sorry to say we cannot replace your game as it was not manufactured by MicroProse, but marketed by our previous licence, US Gold'. I think someone's trying to tell me something.

Obviously the game has been sold to another company who now manufacture and distribute it. I would have thought that if, as I suspect, US Gold are responsible for this game and genuinely have no more copies lying around then they should have offered me another title.

I would appreciate any advice you could give me regarding this matter.

Gerry Shephard

Come on, this is a bit shabby guys – over to you US Gold and MicroProse. It seems to me that whatever circumstances now obtain, someone here's responsible for replacing what could be a faulty product, and like Gerry, I suspect that's US Gold. But MicroProse is losing a useful opportunity for some good public relations too . . .

LM



ZZAP! -RRap

A DIAMOND DEPARTS

Dear Lloyd,
It is with heavy heart (sob, sob) I write to you and ZZAP! for the very last time (tell those mutinous minions to stop cheering). I am upgrading to the Amiga, and am saying a heart-rending farewell to my faithful old 64, (excuse me while I dry my eyes).

So in future there will be no more Jaunty Julian, Pleasant Paul, Stalwart Steve, Loyal Lloyd, no more brilliant reviews (sorry my tissue is soaked, sniffle!) I will not be seeing Traumatic Tamara again (hip hip hooray) no more will I hear the thunderous rumblings of the Superstar Scorelord, or witness the magic of The Harlequin. No more will I be able to read the wonderful amazing, interesting ZZAP Rrap (I am an awful crawler).

So how can I survive the future without this stupendous publication every month? What will it take to ease a broken heart? (A ZZAP! sweatshirt would help). How can I fill this dark and fearful passage of time without going completely ga-ga.

The answer my friends is really simple – I bought the new Newsfield mag, THE GAMES MACHINE, and do you know a lot of my family and friends tell me that since I've known I won't be buying ZZAP! again, I've become a really nice person to know. No more the wild-eyed, raving, obnoxious, aggressive, argumentative, lewd and foul-mouthed ogre I was! So people if you have any or all of these symptoms, a good rub down with the very first issue of THE GAMES MACHINE is the perfect remedy.

Well Lloyd, to be serious for a moment, I would like to thank ZZAP! for a lot of good reading, fun and the Pouting Flathead which I won last year. I have upset some people in the Rrap in the past, but as you yourself said at the time, this is what Rrap is about – the right of everyone to have their say. A lot of things in the mag I didn't like were for outweighed by what I did like.

So please print this letter, as I would like to see my name in ZZAP! one last time, (I'll still read my mate's copy) and I wish all at ZZAP! all the very best for the future (OH, God I've run out of tissues).

Jack (sob, sniffle) Diamond, Ayr

Gosh, Jack, what can I say?! No more Jack Diamond letters, no more Jack Diamond backlashes, no more screwing up those letters, throwing them furiously in the waste bin, then (conscience pricking) retrieving them and typing them in with gnashing teeth . . . ? Life just won't be the same. But wait! Before you depart, take a look at our wondrous 16-Bit supplement in this issue – maybe you'll get rehooked, and there'll be some Amiga updates now and then . . .

LM

BE FAIR TO BUDGET GAMES

Dear Lloyd
I must disagree with the recent changes made in the system of reviewing budget games. The views on page seven of the October 1987 issue – 'budget games neither need nor deserve the same in-depth coverage as other software' – may be true in certain cases, but I'm sure that the ZZAP! team are perfectly aware that many budget games are of as high a standard as most full-priced games. It seems very unfair to me that a company that has the guts to release a high quality game at budget price is penalised by getting a tiny review, whereas an inferior game which receives much lower marks gets a full-page review, simply because the publishers felt they could get away with putting an £8.99 tag on it.

I agree that the new format may be be suitable for low standard budget games as there are quite a few of these, but I am sure the ZZAP! readers would like to see the good games reviewed in depth, regardless of price.

In the past games such as *Thrust* and *Kikstart* were justifiably brought to attention by giving them double-page colour spreads with several screen shots, whereas *Revenge II* and *Arcade Classics* now have to make do with only half a page. This is unfair both to the public and the publishers.

Andrew Graham, Perthshire

Yours is not the only letter on this subject Andrew, so before answering in any detail, here are snippets from some more readers' letters . . .

LM

What is the world coming to? I realise that any good budget games get almost a full page review, but what about those games which don't quite hit the mark for a Silver Medal award? If a programmer has written a good budget program but it doesn't quite get a Silver Medal, he turns to the budget section . . . and finds his game review has been stuffed into a little box with a rating at the bottom. Some, like *Thrust* and *Park Patrol* are very good. By taking up arms against budget titles you have angered me and maybe others.

Nicholas Drew

I would willingly pay £1.25 if this sort of editorial abortion could be avoided in future. Another 25p could have saved Issue 30 from being the worst, in my opinion, in the history of ZZAP! 64.

How can a game like Arcade Classics by Firebird get half a page review. A screen shot and two squashed opinions when it's twice as good as *Centurions* by Reaktör, and that gets double the space, only because it's more expensive – that's stupid!

I believe after many months of debate, ZZAP! has finally submitted to those who argue that budget games should be separated.

The Silver Medal Award is verging on racism and ZZAP! seems to have become the South Africa of computer review magazines, separating the expensive from the cheap for some idiotic reason.

After reading THE GAMES MACHINE, it proves you're still capable of producing unbeatable magazines and editorial sections!

Anthony Stevens, Southend-On-Sea

The recent ZZAP! 64 made me very angry – you discriminate against budget software because of its price. I think that a game is a game and should be treated as such no matter the price. Knowing something about magazines and how important advertisers are, I think that you try to push full-price software. A logical commercial point of view for a business man, but unfair when you see it as a reader. I feel sorry about it – for ZZAP! 64.

Kees Beekhuis, The Netherlands

Let's get one thing straight (referring to the first letter from Andrew) – you're being emotive in using a word like 'guts'. Guts don't come into it. Budget houses have a very straightforward marketing policy. Their prices are low because the two major handlers of budget software use outlets such as newsagents, garages and supermarkets, so the prices have to be low. They don't necessarily expect to make more profit per title than a full-price game. Besides, Mastertronic own Melbourne House because they also want to develop much more detailed games which require a higher price to get a return on the investment.

With that off my chest I'll turn to our decision. For a start you're talking to a bit of a fence squatter on this one. Some months ago both ZZAP! and CRASH were faced with a decision: whether to stop reviewing budget games – I'll outline the reasons in a moment. CRASH refused to stop, preferring instead to devote less space to reviews (whether full-priced or budget) with ratings of less than 50%. ZZAP! opted for a budget ghetto. Within that, there's really no reason why an excellent budget game shouldn't get plenty of space for its review.

The reasons why the decision had to be faced are complex, but put simply, this was the situation: budget houses have never advertised significantly if at all, full-price games are inevitably backed up with plenty of advertising – and don't forget, ANY magazine needs advertising revenue to exist if it is to keep its cover price down. Without that revenue ZZAP!, for example, would have to cost you somewhere between £1.90 and £2.25. As the

WHAT ABOUT THE SUMMER?

Dear Lloyd
I have written to complain to all software houses about something that was brought up in my local computer shop the other week. All through those long (and sometimes hot) summer holidays when kids like me have time to play on the computer and earn money to buy games, the software houses release one or two games. Then, during autumn and winter when kids are back at school, software houses release all the good games at once – like *Street Sports Baseball, Street Sports Basketball, Star Paws, California Games, Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom* and so on.

Us kids haven't got the time or money for games at this time of year.

Glenn Mitchell, Brentwood.

Ah, but whatever you say, software houses have learned by experience that game sales slump during the summer. Try saving your money, so when the winter releases come along you'll be able to afford to buy some of them. Anyway, what about Christmas money and Christmas holidays? You'll just have to wait until then.

LM

percentage of budget titles increased, it became clear that the traditional, full-price software houses were supporting computer magazines with their advertising revenue in order to promote the very budget games which they saw as a threat not only to their full-price sales, but to the very industry itself.

And indeed, for us to continue supporting budget houses who didn't in turn support us with anything, began to look like cutting off our nose to spite our face. Recently Bruce Everiss of Code Masters said in consequence of the demise of full-price software that 'there will be fewer magazines . . . These will hardly be missed.' (Computer Trade Weekly 12 October). Perhaps not by the budget houses who care not a whit whether their product is reviewed or not (it's so cheap, who can resist buying it whether it's good or poor?), but perhaps they will be missed by those 8-bit owners who have a serious interest in the quality of the goods they spend their hard-earned cash on Mr Everiss.

Added to that we have had to consider the space budget games were beginning to take up against the statistics of how many were exceptional, or even worth bothering with at all; and looking back the facts are depressing – not a very good percentage of budget titles to date have been above 55%. As you know, we've never before 'discriminated' against a decent budget game, but perhaps in attempting to sort out what to do, we've overdone (or underdone) it when it comes to the space allowed to reasonable budget games. As I said at the start, I sit on a fence, but I think I prefer the CRASH system of simply treating every game similarly regardless of its price, and creating space by giving less to unworthy games – although this hardly satisfies the requirement of the full-price software houses who support us with revenue.

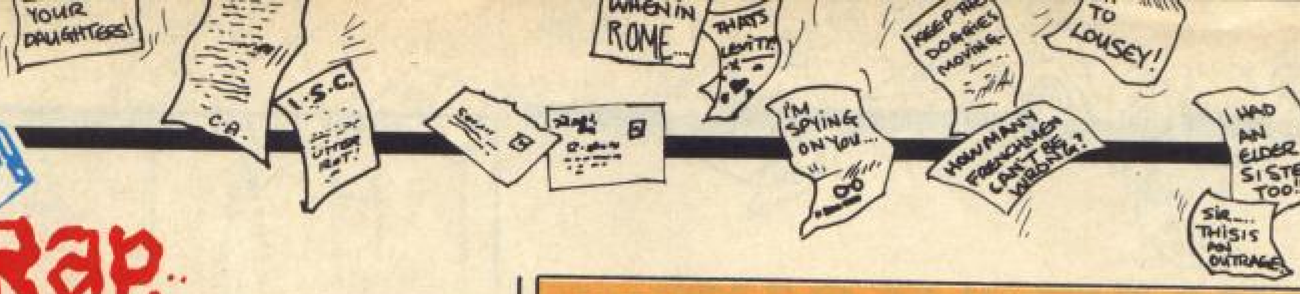
And to those who regard this consideration as a 'businessman's' ethic, I can only say that it's a question of realities – after all, we've now got to contend with the like of Mr Everiss and what I take as the 'official' Code Masters policy towards computer magazines. The ultimate question is for you, the reader: do you want to see computer magazines disappear? Do you want to see a situation where there are no reviews of software, where you will buy sight unseen so to speak?

Clearly, if we want to continue providing a proper service to our readers, we must review budget games as well as full-priced ones, but we do so in the knowledge that we are treading on a knife edge, and also with a less glowing attitude to the 'guts' of budget houses than you seem to have. The pricing of budget games is a cynical market exercise (like any), the benefits of which are supposed to accrue to the budget houses – if those benefits coincide with yours as a purchaser, all well and good, but if they don't, I would be surprised if the gutsy budget house would care two hoots; any more, to be fair, than would a full-price software house putting out a game it knew to be poor but stuck with a higher price point. The only difference is that you probably wouldn't buy it, because £10 bears thinking about, whereas you will still pour profit into a budget house pocket for a bad cheap game, because you wouldn't think half as hard about blowing two quid.

So you see, the changes (and the views) have come about as a result of deep consideration and not simply because ZZAP! wanted to penalise anyone.

Thank you for the views I've received so far, and sorry to go on so long about this, but it is an interesting topic. I would be glad to hear many more views.

LM ▶



ZZAP! RRAP

SHORT SIGHT FRIGHT

Dear Lloyd
How are you? Just stop and think how your body is feeling reading this ten thousandth letter. Does your back ache, are your feet sore, is your brain exploding with headaches? Most probably your eyes are very strained and very tired indeed, and that is what this letter is about.

This letter is probably more meaningful to the reviewers rather than you as I don't suppose you sit in front of monitors for hours on end every day.

You see, I bought my 64 some two years ago and have since spent many enjoyable hours on it. However, as the months went by, I noticed a steady deterioration in the strength of my eyes. I originally used to have my TV about ten feet away from where I sat but, as the months went by I began to subconsciously move closer and closer towards the television set in order to see properly. Soon I was only about six feet away – partly because I bought a short TV computer lead but mainly because my eyes had worsened – and then only about four feet. Recently I finally realised something was wrong and subsequently had my eyes checked out. I was prescribed spectacles and now my sight is perfect.

If I hadn't gone earlier to my optician my eyesight could have deteriorated to the same level as a 35-year-old rather than that of a 16-year-old school boy. Wearing glasses steadies the worsening effect of television and other powerful visuals so I recommend all ZZAP!ers to get their eyes checked out.

Most particularly I appeal to the ZZAP! reviewing team to do the same and check out their eyesight, because every photograph we see of them shows the monitors to be very close to the potential seating area and none seem to wear glasses.

Asim Sibtain, London.

Research into the effects of Visual Display Units (VDU), or monitors (or tellies) has produced conflicting evidence. During the Seventies, American researchers observed that the average viewing distance from the television of teenagers had decreased to about one foot! It was as though that generation actually wanted to get into the TV. Yet the incidence of poor eyesight hardly changed – and the Americans are very health conscious.

It's a well accepted fact that during early adolescence (and boys appear to suffer more for some reason) the eyesight can change dramatically (usually towards short-sightedness), so it may be a mistake to blame your eyesight on your VDU. Incidentally, Julian went to the optician a couple of months ago, and was found to have perfect 20/20 vision – not bad for someone who spends most of his time staring at either a word processor or Commodore monitor. However, some protective rules have been suggested, such as not having a monitor close to the wall so that your eyes have something at a greater distance than the screen to refocus on from time to time. This forces the eye muscles to work and stops them becoming lazy.

LM

DON'T POKE SO SOON

Dear Lloyd
Now for my complaint. It is not directed at ZZAP! specifically, but at all computer magazines who have a tips section! It seems that game hackers are in abundance nowadays, and as soon as a game appears in the local computer shop there's POKEs for infinite lives or to avoid sprite collision in some magazine.

People, being inquisitive, type them in finish the game and are then bored for the next few weeks until they can afford to buy yet another game. Authors are also to blame as they incorporate 'cheats' into the game.

Can there not be some sort of delay used by all magazines to allow us gamers a decent try at a game before being tempted to type in POKEs? In the case of the 'press a couple of keys and get extra lives' cheat, you sometimes can't help noticing the cheat as you flick through the mag. Curiosity then gets too much and the cheat is entered.

Anthony Bung, Bromsgrove, Worcs

Don't be silly – nobody is forcing you to enter any POKEs. Just because they're there, it doesn't mean you have to use them. It's rather like having a larder full of food and feeling you have to eat it all at once. Just control yourself!

LM

MATURING NICELY

Dear Lloyd
Since my first encounter with ZZAP! 64 (Issue 4) I've seen the magazine grow in confidence and professionalism. At first you were both cautious and tentative. You were experimenting, 'trying out the readers'. The requirements for a great game were not quite so stringent. The Rrap was more light-hearted with readers prepared to have a 'biruvva laff', but now in the days of conversions, tie-ins and piracy, things have changed.

Readers look upon these problems and feel they must act. I'm not saying these problems were non-existent in earlier issues but the readers were also uncertain about a relatively new magazine.

Now the reviewers are household names we can relate to, not 'just another blockhead who reviews games'. Reviews were not treated with the harshness shown today – you had to be careful not to offend. That's not the case now; we have a fair idea of the tastes of the reviewers. That's why a new reviewer is never really popular until he has settled in and people know how he reviewers and in what style according to his taste.

ZZAP! has grown in confidence, improving month by month, year by year. Your views can be expressed freely now without thinking you could be condemned for what you have said. The wisecracks are more hard-hitting and confident, rather than little comments every now and then.

Now (start squeaky violin tune), I feel I am part of a family growing and growing, helping (fade violins) each other at every opportunity, I can really relate to you. One point though, I remember the days when readers could write in and their letters would be funny and enjoyable to read. Life isn't all full of problems is it? C'mon lads and ladesses (no sexism here I can tell you) write in and have a good time, and a larf every now and then pleeese.

Marios Stylianides, London.

I don't know about being cautious. Seems to me we rather quickly upset a certain Jeff Minter and, even worse, the Minter Horde (a Mongolian word used in conjunction with the Tartar invasions of Middle Ages Europe and meaning 'tent', or those who lived in tents) with our review of Mamma Llama. The Tartar horde enjoyed marauding a lot (rather like latter-day aliens, they always maraud, don't they?), and hacking off people's heads. Fortunately Minter's followers used words rather than scimitars, although I'm not sure whether that was better. Yes, more confident now, but more cautious then – I'm not sure. I mean, would you go up to Jeff Minter's stand at the PCW Show and loudly say, 'I hated Mamma Llama', and expect to get away with your head intact?

LM

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Richard Swinfen, 14 Cedar Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee, Scotland, DD5 3BB would like to write to anyone who programs machine code for the C64.
Gilbert Olsson aged 15 of Radhusgton 4B, S-151 3350 Dertal SE, Sweden, would like to write to male or females who own a C64 and cassette deck.
Luke Burns of 7 Queen Street, Avonmouth, Bristol, BS11 9AL wants a penpal with a C16 or a C64.
Devree Joel, 147 Rue Cimetiere, 7070 Houdeng Goegnies, Belgium is 27 and owns a cassette C64 and would like a penpal from any part of Britain.
Clive Austin, 16 years, of 6 Robin Close, Midsomer Norton, Bath, Avon, BA3 4NJ is seeking a penpal aged between 15 and 18 who uses his Commodore not only to play games but for other interesting computer things as well!

Well, there we go, another year almost over, another soon to begin. Work's already started on the Christmas Special, which I hope you'll find very special, and then there's just time to get February's ZZAP! to the printer before we break for Christmas itself. But by then we'll be thinking of spring and Easter – that's the trouble with mags, they rush you through life too fast sometimes! Don't forget, if you have anything on your chest which you would rather was on mine (no sexism here!), write to LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB, and include a huge fat check made out to Mangram Management Inc. and I may even print your letter . . .

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"...ACE 2 is a worthy successor to ACE." C+VG Hit! October '87

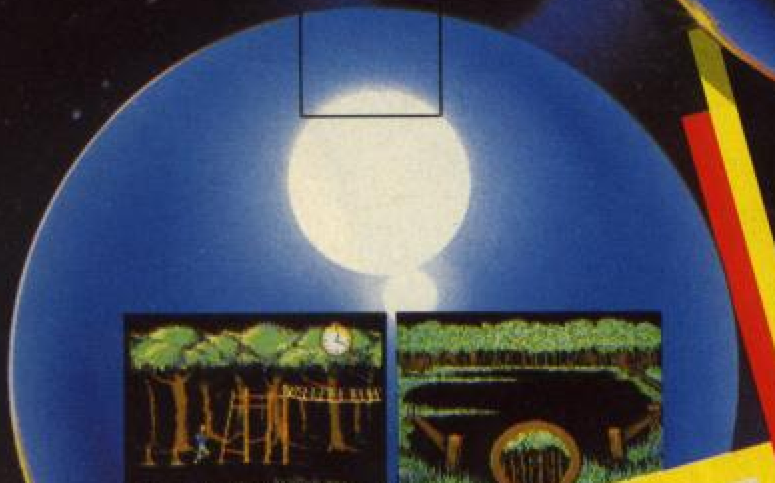
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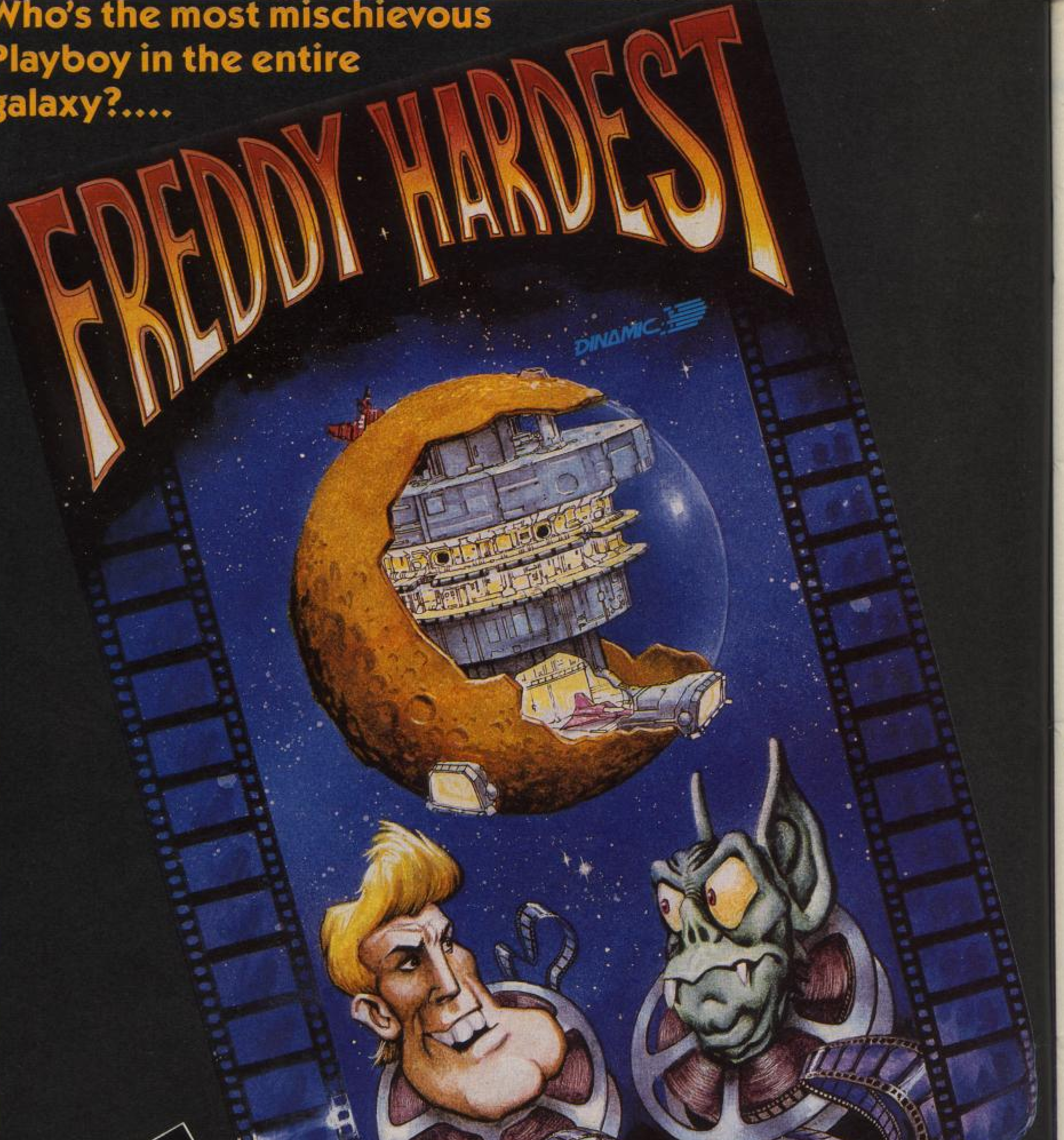
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GNOME RANGER

Level 9, £9.95 cassette or disk

Remember the good old days when Level 9 were independent? They treated the adventure world to masses of text and puzzle solving in their never-to-be-forgotten epics such as *Snowball, Lords of Time* and *Adventure Quest*. It appears they wish to go it alone again with their new title, *Gnome Ranger*, although they have by no means broken off their association with Rainbird, as future releases will demonstrate.



Ingrid Violet Bottomlow is a bossy, thick-skinned gnome who is eventually banished to the wilderness by her exasperated family. The basic aim is to get Ingrid safely back home, while sorting out some local problems on the way.

The first thing I have to mention are the graphics: they're very nice – not quite up to Magnetic Scrolls' standards, but a vast improvement on the usual Level 9 pictures. What is interesting is that they load separately from side two of the disk, thus demonstrating that all of the memory has been used for the text, a method which the Austins have utilised throughout their adventure career, using only the spare bytes for graphics.

The amount of text which Level 9 squeeze into the 64 is near mind-blowing. Screens and screens of text slowly scroll up as events and locations are vividly described. The parser itself is very acceptable, with the now almost expected ability to understand such inputs as TAKE ALL BUT THE BELL and CENTAUR, TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF. The player may also FOLLOW another character, FIND a certain object known to exist within the adventure, or even RUN TO or GO TO any location.

There are times when Ingrid needs to locate an item to enable her to placate or befriend a creature, so it in turn helps her with the quest. These inhabitants are mostly friendly, and are quite articulate in conversation and carrying out orders. They can do little



jobs for Ingrid while she concentrates on the more important tasks, and they even report back to her when the job is finished!

The adventure comes in three parts, each of which is completed before the player proceeds to the following section. Positions can be loaded or saved to or from tape, disk or RAM, and the very useful OOPS command can be used to take back a move should it prove fatal.

The graphics may be dispensed with entirely, or raised bit by bit with the cursor keys. Text can be defaulted to brief or verbose, and the command AGAIN repeats the last input.

Gnome Ranger is a very professional, highly interactive adventure. The pretty pictures add to the already adequate ambience created by the text, and the parser is intelligent enough to deal with most inputs. The only grudge, and there had to be one, is the game's slowness, but even this does not detract from the playability. I would like to welcome Level 9 back to the top three in my adventure writers chart . . . and let's hear it for the price!

ATMOSPHERE	89%
INTERACTION	82%
CHALLENGE	86%
OVERALL	87%

ZODIAC/THE SEARCH FOR THE SECRET OF LIFE

Incentive Double Pack, £7.95 cassette

The secret of life (apart from being a number) is apparently kept in a far off land, the whereabouts of which lies within the walls of two different houses. The player has been given the address of one of these buildings by a kindly benefactor, and in no time finds himself amid its walls, exploring like mad.

The first problem is to find an exit. However, this is not enough – a password is also required to guarantee passage to the next house, and indeed the second part of the adventure.

At the start, a brown and yellow picture is presented, supposedly depicting a corridor. However, my first perceptions were proved incorrect by the text beneath this graphic illustration which read, 'You are at the southern end of the hall. To your south and east there are doors'. It was at this point that my heart sank and I buried my head in my hands . . .

A little while later I attempted to face the screen again and decided to give this new adventure from ►

Incentive the old once over, it surely couldn't get any worse.

I went south and was told (in yellow) that I was in the cloakroom. SEARCH CLOAKROOM says I: 'You can't' is the response. I try LEAVE CLOAKROOM: 'You can't' it says again. HELP says I: 'You can't' says it! Remaining totally calm I input 'N' to escape this less than friendly location. Exploring the house revealed many more juicy descriptions such as: 'You are on a flight of stairs', 'You are in a Hall' and 'You are on the landing facing east'. The atmosphere created by this prose is nil.

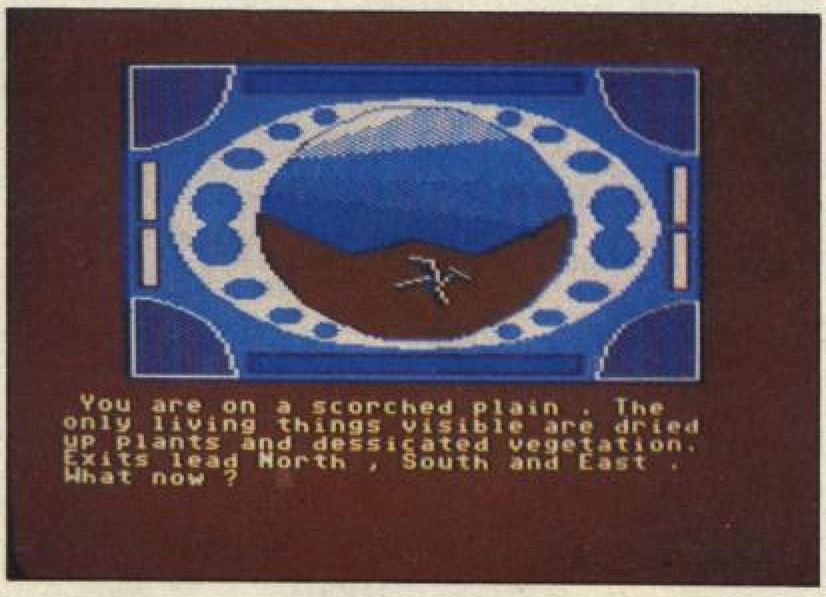
One particular location almost caused me to destroy my Commodore with a quick zap from my blaster: the empty panel–walled bedroom. I tried EXAMINEing the walls, SEARCHing the bedroom, OPENing the walls, OPENing the panels and even KICKing them, to no avail. Of course, the answer seems obvious now: PUSH the panels, but to fully appreciate the frustration of having to deal with a pathetic parser you had to be there. Oh, by the way – PUSHing the panels is a task which can be repeated over and over again, regardless of whether the secret door has opened or not.

I persevered and gained access to part two, which was no better and no worse. I don't understand games of this type which, for example, displays 'You are in a secret room known as a priest hole. There are footprints in the dust.' when the parser doesn't understand footprints (or even prints). The excuse that it creates atmosphere just doesn't wash, it only adds to the frustration.

This adventure comes in three parts: The House, The Eighth Sea and The Secret, all of which are basic to say the least. For me, the secret of life is certainly not plodding my way through a dreary game trying to guess which verbs and nouns the author has managed to include in the database.

Zodiac, is better. The story tells of Ramus, an evil Wizard who is intent on destroying you and your ancient tribe of warriors. He must be stopped of course, but the only clue is written in the Scriptures of Barenola, which state that Ramus' weakness lies is in the stars. Judarez, the wise man of the tribe, has studied these scriptures and knows exactly how to destroy the wizard. However, he is now old and frail and certainly not up to the fight. This is where the player comes in.

The mission is to find the twelve signs of the zodiac and return with them to the encampment so that Judarez may utilise them and rid the tribe of this evil threat. The quest begins with the player on the open road. Again, sparse descriptions are used, but at least the parser database is better. 'HELP' is recognised (even if the reply is of no great assistance) and the EXAMINE command is well catered for. The annoying 'sudden death' syndrome is present, and frequent saving is recommended to avoid such abrupt endings as sinking in the swamp due to a lack of wellies being worn.



A number of the problems require a little brainstorming. A scorpion lurks on the desert plain but there is no warning of it being there. However, once the player has died a few times from the creature's sting it may dawn on him to carry an antidote when entering these sandy wastes. While on the subject of obscurity, those who can get rid of the Giant without any help should put a feather in their cap.

The pictures which appear to accompany every location are not very good and, I feel a corny phrase coming on, the memory used on the graphics could have been better spent enhancing the text. Accepting the fact that Zodiac was written using the *GAC*, and comparing it to *The Secret of Life*, what we have here is an acceptable little adventure which should keep a player quietly amused for some time.

As a package, this latest offering from Incentive seems to represent reasonable value for money. Unfortunately, the actual games themselves are decidedly uninspiring. A price of £7.95 may appear fair to pay for four adventures, but I feel that the depth and content is so disappointing that this is not the case.

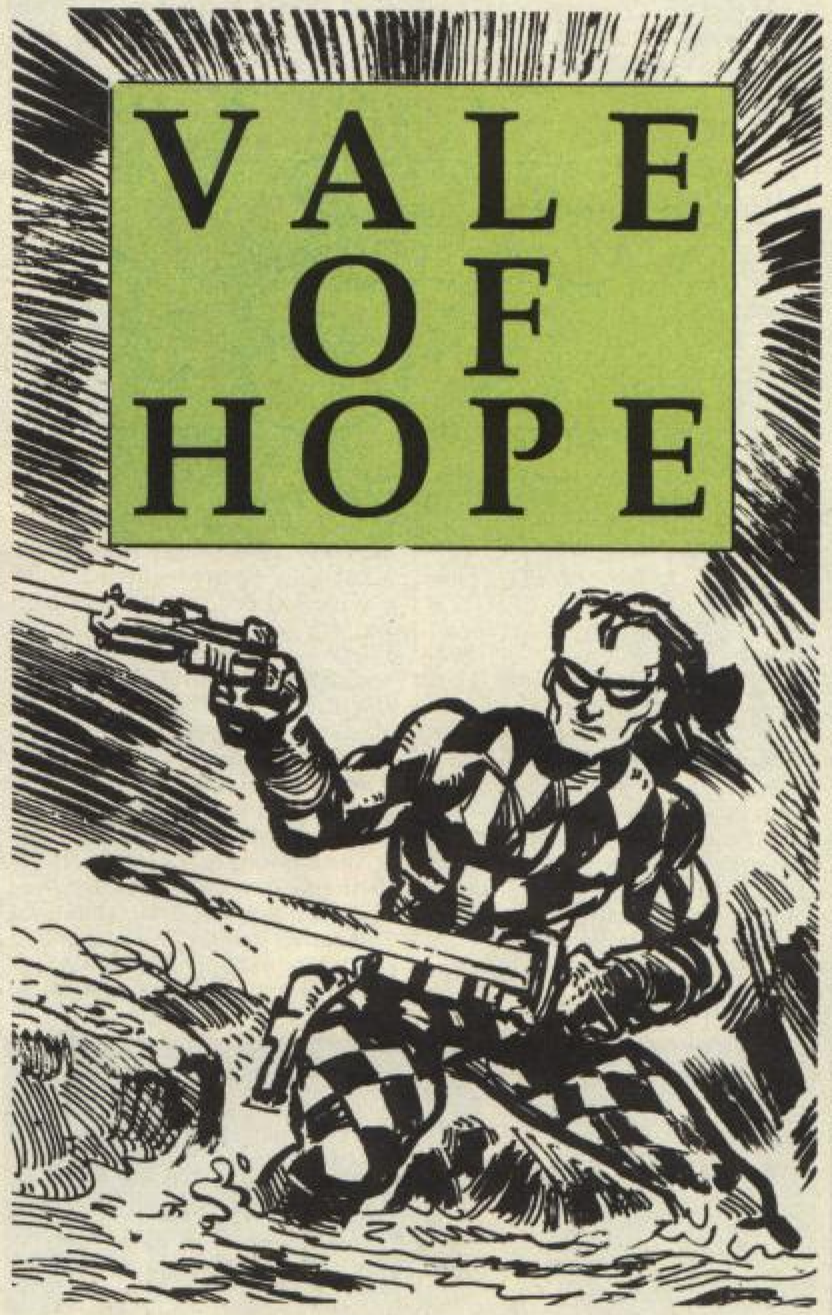
ZODIAC

ATMOSPHERE	38%
INTERACTION	47%
CHALLENGE	45%
OVERALL	46%

THE SECRET OF LIFE

ATMOSPHERE	22%
INTERACTION	32%
CHALLENGE	38%
OVERALL	29%

For those of you lesser beings who are apparently troubled by insignificant problems such as how to pass the Balrog, or where to find the sword, fear not, I shall guide you. Walk with me now through the . . .



CASTLE OF TERROR (Melbourne House): Give the old man a pint and use the ladder rung to wedge that wheel.
CASTLE BLACKSTAR (C.D.S.): The Hydra may be hungry but feed it from a distance.
DRACULA PART II (CRL): Wait until you see Dracula leave before entering his room.
FRANKENSTEIN PART III (CRL): Squash the remaining fruit into segments to feed to the lion.
GUILD OF THIEVES (Rainbird/Magnetic Scrolls): The lamp is in your sack. Those bars are not what they seem.
HOLLYWOOD HIJINX (Infocom): Access to the house is poetic justice.
INFIDEL (Infocom): The statue to the north of the alter is the same weight as you.
KNIGHT ORC (Rainbird/Level Nine): Give the scale to the dragon, then get him to dispose of the humans. You may then get his smoke.
LEATHER GODDESSES (Infocom): If Thorbast drops his sword, give it back to him.
PLANETFALL (Infocom): Search Floyd for the lower elevator pass. Use the ladder from storage to bridge the rift.

VALE OF HOPE

SHADOWS OF MORDOR (Melbourne House): Written permission is required to get past the Orc checkpoint.

SEABASE DELTA (Firebird): Drop the pill on the mat to prevent it bouncing away.
THE LURKING HORROR (Infocom): The elixir is a handy problem.
WINTER WONDERLAND (Incentive): Cleaning fluid and ice don't mix.
WISHBRINGER (Infocom): Branching out may help Tasmania.

EXAMINE ALL

Zapping around all five dimensions conquering evil really takes it out of a guy. So much so that relative time has caught me with my diamonds down, and as a consequence the letter section is a little short this month. My apologies, I promise that even if I have to bend the timescale a touch in the next four weeks, I will see more of your communications.

Matthew Vallender writes with a plea for help with a game called *Breakers*, and would like to know how he may obtain some money from Betty. I haven't heard of this adventure, but if any one out there has, you may contact Matthew on (07375) 55130 (at a reasonable hour). By the way, thanks for your clues on *The Guild of Thieves*, and yes, I have heard of 'What Now', that very good adventure dossier which I read whenever the boys remember to send me a copy!

Peter Waterfall has written to me to plead for help in *Se–Kaa of Assiah*. He would specifically like to know how to pass the Black Guardian and get the casket from the Crystal Tower. (051) 608 7234 will reach Peter should you be able to help.

G F Young of Edgeware, Middlesex recently wrote to inform me about *Lap of the Gods*. This, apparently, is one of those MUD/SHADES clones which can be accessed in the same way at a cost of £25 plus VAT per quarter. It's run by Tiger Tiger and Mr Young (who's apparently a monk) and both are very pleased with the game. He has even given me the number to Logon: 01 994 9119.

Richard Herod of Royton, Oldham has written in to complain about the cost of Infocom games. He argues that as blank disks are so cheap (some as little as £19 for 25 with a free box), Infocom, who must buy them in bulk, should be able to charge less. Unfortunately Richard, if you were to load up one of these blank disks I think you may find it a little more boring than playing an Infocom adventure. You see, it's not so much the disk you're paying for but all the hard work – writing, programming, playtesting and so on which goes into the game. I'm sure that if you look around you will come across dealers who will provide these games for much less than the £30 you have previously paid. As for my top ten Infocom games, Richard, I'll tell you my top three: *Zork III*, *Starcross* and *Sorcerer*, not necessarily in that order.

And that brings the second EXAMINE ALL to a close. If you wish to appear amid these hallowed pages, take some time out and write to me at this address: **THE HARLEQUIN, EXAMINE ALL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**.

SERIALISED SOLUTION NUMBER ONE (PART TWO)

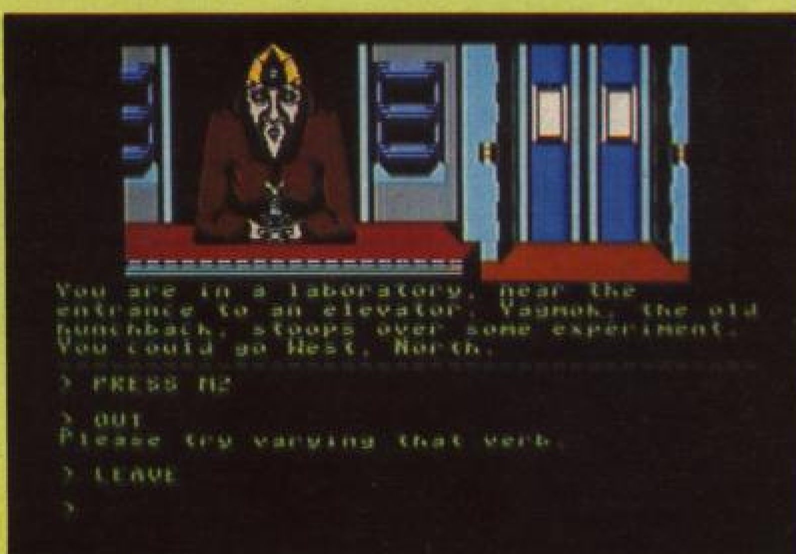
KAYLETH

US GOLD/ADVENTURESOFT

Judging from the letter which came flooding in concerning this section, (merci Patrick) there appears to be a little confusion about how it works. Allow me to make things a little more clear. Last month's article was only the first part of the solution. I shall in fact be taking you through the whole of the adventure to the very climax. So for those of you who may have thought I had left you dangling, so to speak, read on . . .

Last month I left you experimenting with the three Azap codes we had learned, ROO, DHT and ELY. Transport to the latter chamber so that we may continue. Going up from here takes you to a corridor near the entrance to an elevator where we find a Pyxis. Upon examination you are told that the Pyxis is a small box which can be opened (I recommend a 'RAM SAVE here'). Obviously curiosity rules, and out pops a pair of lenses which expand on contact with the air so that they no longer fit into the box! 'RAM LOAD' and you are back with a closed box plus the knowledge of what it contains. West is the Zyron selection centre where, if you EXAMINE the sleepers, you discover that they are labelled 'Rejects for DX'. To the south of here is an Azap Chamber which displays a 'DX' logo which, as learned from the sleepers, signifies a reject! However, try it for yourself if you don't believe me.

If you're still alive, go back to the elevator, enter it and look at the panel. The available floors are marked G, M1 and M2, obviously the one flashing (M1) is where you are now. Press M2 and leave the elevator to enter a laboratory where Yagmok resides. Try talking to the old man. If he ignores you, it may have something to do with what's on (or in) your mind. Remove all cartridges and try again. Yagmok tells you that he may have the key to your problem, and then continues his message in advanced speech. Don't panic. If you can't understand what he tells you, key he promised earlier and wear it with pride. North of here is a cryogenic store room where suspended Zyroneons are kept. There is also a small silver pyramid which must be added to your inventory.



scribble it down and think about the fact that he called it advanced. Perhaps he means substituting each letter with the following one in the alphabet, that is changing S to T and K to L. Try it, or if you're feeling very lazy just read the next sentence.'Skim the sea, Find the coat, Ride the ring, Then down the throat.' This obviously doesn't mean very much at the moment, but it will. Before you leave the lab ask Yagmok for the

Moving south and west takes you to the mind facsimile section in which a dome containing a body-shaped indentation sits. You can do nothing with this yet (unless you're tired of living), but remember it for later on in the adventure.

Now go back into the elevator and press G, this takes you to the planet surface where, next month, we shall face many dangers together – so wear your khaki trousers.



Clever Contacts

David Sutherlandhas requested that his name be withdrawn from these hallowed pages, consider it done Dave, goodbye and good luck.

As you will notice the column is getting larger every month although one or two of you may wonder why your particular adventuring conquests have not appeared lately. The reason is one of administration, or rather the lack of it. However, do not despair, if you would still like to re–enter the Clever Contacts then simply write to me with the relevant information and I shall endevour to ensure your inclusion in future issues.

Once again I will ask that a little consideration be used when obtaining help from these adventurous people. If I hear of contacts being phoned in the dead of night then woe betide the usurpers for they shall be answerable to The Harlequin.

Adventureland, Adventure Quest, Arrow of Death I & II, Ballyhoo, Blade of Blackpoole, Borrowed Time, Buckaroo Banzai, Castle of Terror, Circus, Colditz, Crystals of Carus, Cutthroats, Dallas Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Empire of Karn, Enchanter, Erik the Viking, Escape from Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Eye of Bain, Feasibility Experiment, Forest at the Worlds End, Ghost Town, Golden Voyage, Gremlins, Gruds in Space, Hampstead, Heroes of Karn, Infidel, Invincible Island, Kayleth, Kentilla, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Lucifers Realm, Magicians Ball, Magic Stone, Mask of the Sun, Mindshadow, Mission Asteroid, Moonmist, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Funhouse, Mystery of Munroe Manor, Ninja, Perseus and Andromeda, Pharaohs Tomb, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Pyramid of Doom, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Ring of Power, Robin of Sherwood, Savage Island I, Secret Mission, Ship of Doom, Sorceror, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spiderman, Strange Odyssey, Tass Times, Ten Little Indians, The Count, Golden Baton, Hobbit, The Institute, Jewels of Babylon, The Journey, Never Ending Story, Pawn, Time Machine, Wizard and Princess, Quest of Merravid, Tower of Despair, Tracer Sanction, Twin Kingdom Valley, Ultima I, III & IV, Urban Upstart, Ulysses and the Golden Fleece, Valkyrie 17, Velnors Lair, Voodoo Castle, Warlords, Waxworks, Winter Wonderland, Wishbringer, Witches Cauldron, Wizard Akyrz, Wrath of Magra, Zork I, II & III, Zzzzz . . .
Bob Shepherd, 106, Highfield Street, Coalville, Leicestershire.

The Hobbit, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Zzzzz, Spytrek, Robo City, Imagination, Demon Knight, Koboyashu Naru, Tower of Despair, Time Tunnel, Citadel of Chaos, Eureka (parts 1 and 2).
Paul Hardy, 33 Fir Tree drive, Wales, Sheffield S31 8LZ.

Heroes of Karn, Bored of the Rings, Gremlins, Voodoo Castle, Zim Zala Bim, Mugsys Revenge, Tropical Adventure, Dracula, Holy Grail, The Pawn, Return to Oz, Masters of the Universe, Robin of Sherwood, Fourth Protocol, Price of Magik.
Christophe Brassart, 67 rue de l'Abbe Lemire, 59200 TOURCOING, France.

Sherlock, Gremlins, Hulk, Spiderman, Fourth Protocol, Dallas Quest, Terrormolinos, Hobbit, Castle of Terror Parlapas Aris, 18 Pyrsinella Str 453 32, Ioannina, Greece Pawn, Tass Times, Borrowed Time, Tracer Sanction, Mindshadow, Starcross, Wishbringer, Seastalker, Ballyhoo, Enchanter, Sorceror, Spellbreaker, Leather Goddesses, Hitchhikers, Hulk, Spiderman, Fantastic Four, Gremlins, Red Moon, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Worm in Paradise, Dungeon Adventure, Colossal Adventure, Return to Eden, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Nine Princes in Amber, Pilgrim, Perseus and Andromeda.
Guy Thomas, 17 Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4NA. Tel: 0227 274846 (10 am to 8 pm ONLY)

Tower of Despair, Dracula, Adventureland, Zim Zala Bim, Castle of Terror, Time Tunnel, Eureka.
John Paterson, 8 Bracadale Road, Baillieston, Glasgow G69
Tel: 041 771 7729

Mordons Quest, Spiderman, Hacker
Nigel 'Nemesis' Richardson Tel: 01 360 8325

Zork I, II & III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, HitchHikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, Sub-Sunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla.
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia.

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry Christmas, Robin of Sherwood, Price of Magik, Lord of the Rings.
Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH. Tel: 0606 781028

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol (Pt 3 only).
Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY. Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin of Sherwood
Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN

Adventureland, SubSunk, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand. Tel: 867074

Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula.
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland. Tel: 036565 594

Upper Gumtree, Bugsy Malone, Never Ending Story.
Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Elmtree Farm, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland TS19 0TJ. Tel: 0642 587789 (between 4pm and 10pm)

The Hobbit, Erik the Viking, Castle of Terror, Eureka, Voodoo Castle, The Count, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Zork I, Zork III, Exodus, Ultima III, The Boggit, Lords of Time, Never ending story, The Hulk, Temple of Terror, Ultima IV, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Valkyrie 17, Sherlock, The fourth protocol, The Helm, Wizard of Akyrz, Perseus and Andromeda, Lord of the rings (part 1), Emerald Isle, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hacker, Colossal Cave.
Steven Kelly, 4 South View, Whins Lane, Simonstone, Burnley, Lancs BB12 7QU. Tel: 0282 74765 (between 6pm and 10 pm)

Hitch-hikers Guide, Zork I, Zork II, Planetfall, Leather Goddesses, Cutthroats.
Dave Rogers, 15 Elm Terrace, Westfield, Radstock, Bath, Avon BA3 3XP.

Amazon, Borrowed Time, Castle of Terror, Castle Adventure, Computer Adventure, Dracula part 1, Grand Larceny, Haunted House, Himalayan Adventure, Labyrinth, Mad Mummy, Mindshadow, Murder on the Waterfront, Never ending story, Ninja, Raka-tua Volcano, Scroll of Akhbar, Seabase Delta, Silver Mountain, Subsunk, The Boggit, The Dallas quest, The Hobbit, Ultima IV, Voodoo Castle, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Zzzz.
Mario Moeller, 38 Greenvale Drive, Greenvale, 3047, Vic. Australia.

Ultima IV, The Bard's Tale, Voodoo Castle, Phantasie I, Never Ending Story, Dracula, The Prince of Magic, Borrowed Time, The Pawn, Seabase Delta, Deadline, Zork III, Wishbringer.
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR4 8EB.

Hitchhikers Guide, The Hobbit, Lord of the Rings, The Shadows of Mordor.
Warren Lee Melia, 1 Thornhill Avenue, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancs, BB1 4EZ.

Castle of Terror, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Mindshadow, Holy Grail, Redhawk, Snowball, Subsunk, Twin Kingdom Valley, Voodoo Castle.
Jeff Gillan, 50 Tynedale Crescent, Penshaw, Houghton–Le–Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 7RP.

Starcross, Suspended, Suspect, Leather Goddesses, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Deadline, Planetfall, Infidel, Cutthroats, Ballyhoo, Lurking Horror, Seastalker, Beuracracy, Trinity, Moonmist, Hollywood Hijinx, Hitchhikers Guide, Wishbringer, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Enchanter, The Pawn, Ultima I, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Sherlock, Gremlins, The Hulk, Terrormolinos, The Fourth Protocol, The Hobbit.
Billy Kavanagh, 49 Drake Hall, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 2RA.

COMING SOON...

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For further information contact Rainbird Software, First Floor, 74 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1PS 01 631 5373



ALIEN AND GREEDY

*Activision's big game of Christmas cheer is likely to be **Predator**, based on the gory new Arnold Schwarzenegger movie. But before the game arrives, how about a look at the film? Curtis Hutchinson previewed the action and spoke to the man of pumped iron himself.*

PREDATOR – THE MOVIE

ARNOLD's back in action and doing what he does best, as he battles against insurmountable odds in a movie that starts out looking like yet another routine invading alien yarn but ends up, by way of some unexpected twists and turns, as a mythological morality tale with good and evil battling it out in a climactic duel to death.

It all begins innocently enough when a voyaging space ship shoots across the screen depositing an earthbound shuttle. No explanations are given. Cut to military briefing, where Major Dutch Schaefer is being handed his next assignment: a daring cover mission to rescue a senator and a group of 'military advisors' being held by guerillas in a jungle hideaway somewhere in Latin America.

Schaefer and his crack force are dropped into the combat zone, where they locate and destroy their target, only to find that the men they were sent to rescue have been killed in a particularly gruesome manner.

Gradually, the two apparently unconnected strands begin to intertwine as Schaefer and company attempt to make their way to the pick-up point. One by one his men are killed by an 'invisible' alien hunter which strikes with inhuman ferocity.

With *Predator*, Arnold Schwarzenegger is treading familiar ground. The movie, with its hot-'em-up battle sequences, smart-ass one liners and superhuman central character could quite easily have been *Commando II*. The parallels are very close indeed and it's difficult to imagine Colonel John Matrix reaching a different denouément than Major Dutch Schaefer.

'I play a character who is always in control of the situation,' says Arnie, 'but all of a sudden, this unknown comes in; something my character has never dealt with in his life – then it becomes scary, and I become vulnerable.'

WARRIOR CODE

'I've always wanted to do a film like *The Magnificent Seven* or *The Wild Bunch*,' Arnie continues. 'What I liked most about *Predator* was the chance to play a character who was part of a team – a commander surrounded by men who were equally powerful, equally well trained. It's much more realistic to have a group of guys working together than to rely entirely on yourself.

'It took me back to my bodybuilding days, where you work with a bunch of guys and a certain camaraderie develops. In this story, there are moments when we are very tough, but at the same time there are deep emotions that show when your buddies are getting killed around you.'

Despite Arnie's good intentions, the film is not about team work, but the instinctive warrior code shared by a professional killer and a visiting alien.

Much of *Predator*'s intensity is down to John McTiernan's taught direction. 'I'd always dreamed of doing an old-fashioned Saturday afternoon adventure picture,' he explains, 'and *Predator* was clearly designed to be pure entertainment in a style I love, which is suspense. It also combined elements you rarely find together – a classic hero story and a horror story, like the Norse myths where heroes battle against

IRON IN THE SOUL – THE FILMS OF ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER's film career began in 1975 with *Pumping Iron*, a documentary about the training and competition for the Mr Olympia contest. His subsequent television appearances as the reigning Mr Olympia brought him to the attention of Lucille Ball who cast the young hopeful in her TV movie, *Happy Anniversary And Goodbye*. This was followed by a succession of inconsequential supporting roles before John Milius picked him for the lead in *Conan The Barbarian* – the surprise hit of 1982.

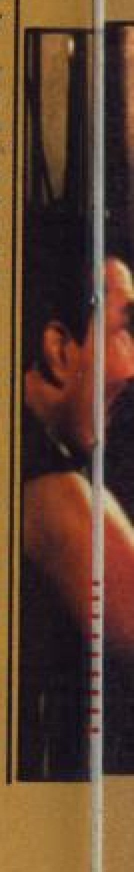
Arnie was later to revive the melancholic wanderer for *Conan The Destroyer*, and then confounded the critics with his extraordinary performance as the robotic killer in James Cameron's *The Terminator*. The popularity of this film led America's influential National Association Of Theatre Owners to crown Arnie the international star of 1985, while the film went on to become the top grossing movie of the year.

The Terminator was inexplicably followed by a supporting role in the Brigitte Nielsen turkey *Red Sonja*. Fortunately this near disaster and the equally ill-advised *Raw Deal* (which cast a fully dressed and distinctively uncomfortable-looking Schwarzenegger in the unlikely guise of an ex-FBI agent who infiltrates the mob) were both overshadowed by *Commando*, regarded by most Arnie aficionados as his best movie to date. (Until they get to see *Predator*, that is).

The commercial success of the Conan movies along with *The Terminator*, *Commando*, and *Predator* (which has already been a massive hit in the states) confirm that Arnie has made the action/adventure genre his own. Keep your shirt off Arnie!

FILMOGRAPHY

Pumping Iron **(1975)**
Happy Anniversary and Goodbye **(TV, 1975)**
Stay Hungry **(1975)**
The Jayne Mansfield Story **(TV, 1979)**
Conan the Barbarian **(1982)**
Conan the destroyer **(1984)**
The Terminator **(1985)**
Red Sonja **(1985)**
Commando **(1986)**
Raw deal **(1987)**
Predator **(1987)**



supernatural beings. It reminded me of the old war movies and comic books with men who were larger than life – and Arnold Schwarzenegger is one of the very few people in the world who have that quality.'

JUNGLE SKILLS

Like so many films being made today – most notably *Platoon*, *Hamburger Hill* and *Full Metal Jacket* – the leading actors in *Predator* were assembled for military style training before shooting commenced.

Schwarzenegger describes the vigorous regime: 'We had done about a month and a half of physical training in the gym in Los Angeles beforehand. In Mexico we'd get up at 6 am for breakfast and then run four or five miles to get into condition.

'After that we worked five or six hours in the jungle on skills training – everything from climbing trees to grappling down ropes to handling the weaponry. We had to learn how to move silently through the jungle and communicate with hand signals and deploy for specific manoeuvres. By that time we were exhausted. Then we went back to the weight room in the hotel and trained for two hours, at which time the director would call us and say, 'Okay, now we rehearse'.'

ALIEN COMPUTER

Because of the film's diverse elements which combine relatively straightforward action and stunt work with the latest in computer generated graphics and optical effects, the filming and subsequent editing of *Predator* were something of a logistical achievement.

The production crew was split into three autonomous units. Director John McTiernan guided the main narrative flow while a second unit, led by *A Team* veteran Craig Baxley, handled the stuntwork and explosions.

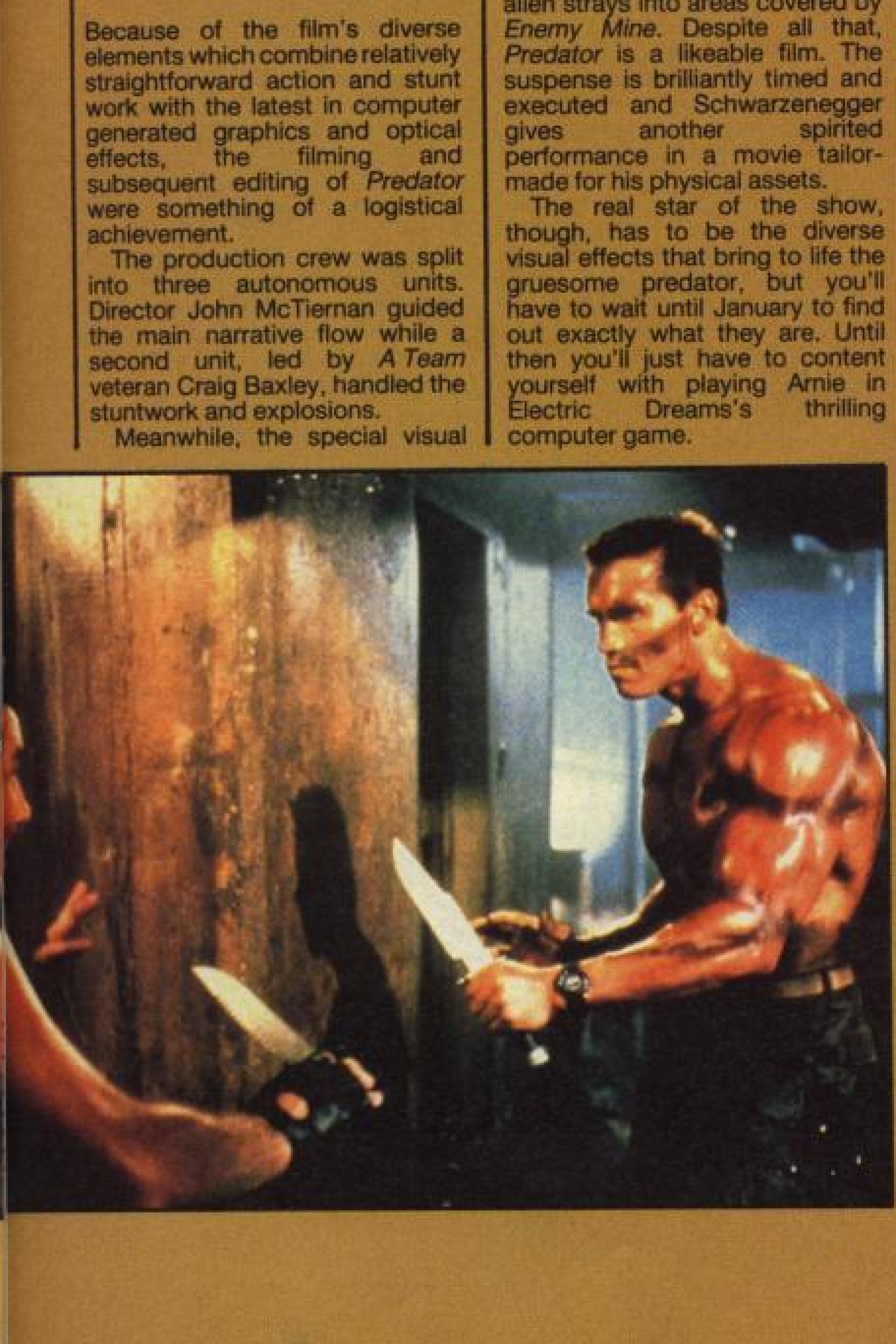
Meanwhile, the special visual effects unit, supervised by Joel Hynek, with its hermetically sealed computer trucks and delicate camera equipment filmed the extraordinary visual effects which serve as the predator's infrared perception of the world. In the finished film human figures are not seen by the predator as flesh and bone but as masses of hot tissues which glow like beacons in a world of darkness.

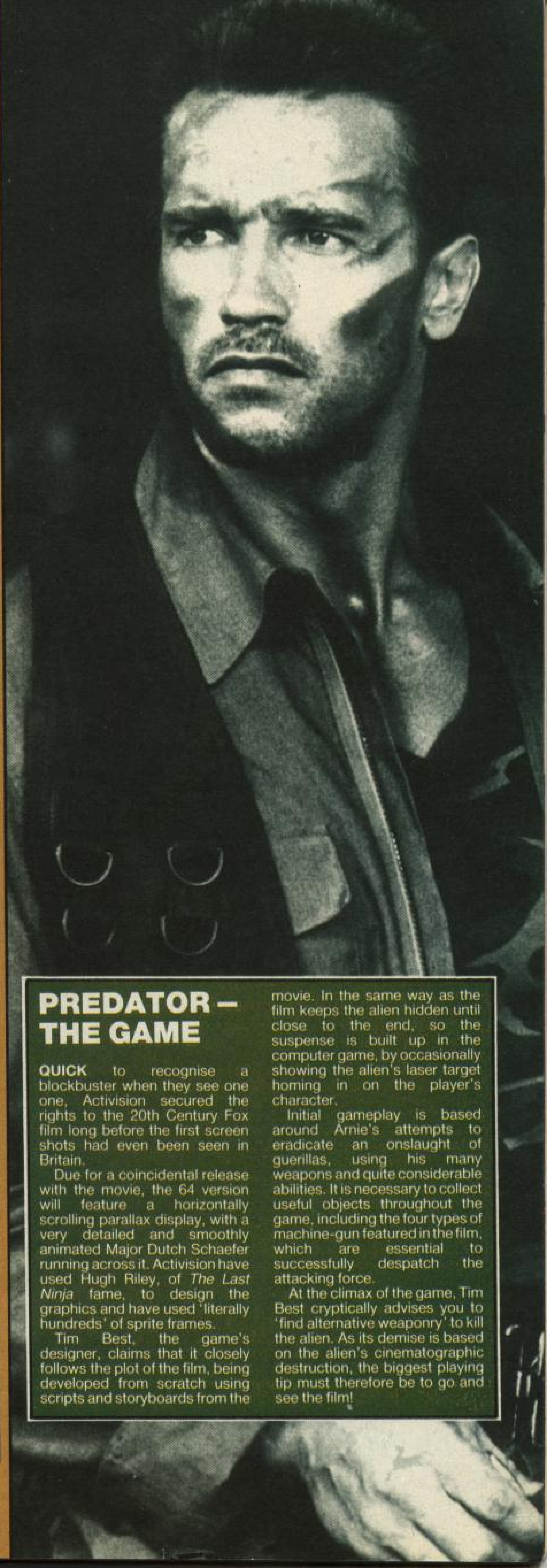
What makes the predator virtually invincible is a cloaking device which renders the alien virtually invisible against the jungle backdrop. This unusual blurring effect, created by animators in post production, is used to great effect as a teaser in the early confrontation scenes. The suspense builds in much the same way as the original Jaws, where you don't actually glimpse the beast until well into the second half of the movie. Unlike Jaws though, the uncloaking of the Predator is not a disappointment. The creature effects unit must have put in a lot of overtime to come up with this particular state of the art monster.

SPIRITED

With so many elements lifted from other films, *Predator* is by no means an original movie. The jungle survival aspect was explored in *Deliverance* and *Southern Comfort*; the action is pure *Rambo* or *Commando*, and the relationship between man and alien strays into areas covered by *Enemy Mine*. Despite all that, *Predator* is a likeable film. The suspense is brilliantly timed and executed and Schwarzenegger gives another spirited performance in a movie tailor-made for his physical assets.

The real star of the show, though, has to be the diverse visual effects that bring to life the gruesome predator, but you'll have to wait until January to find out exactly what they are. Until then you'll just have to content yourself with playing Arnie in Electric Dreams's thrilling computer game.





PREDATOR – THE GAME

QUICK to recognise a blockbuster when they see one one, Activision secured the rights to the 20th Century Fox film long before the first screen shots had even been seen in Britain.

Due for a coincidental release with the movie, the 64 version will feature a horizontally scrolling parallax display, with a very detailed and smoothly animated Major Dutch Schaefer running across it. Activision have used Hugh Riley, of *The Last Ninja* fame, to design the graphics and have used 'literally hundreds' of sprite frames.

Tim Best, the game's designer, claims that it closely follows the plot of the film, being developed from scratch using scripts and storyboards from the movie. In the same way as the film keeps the alien hidden until close to the end, so the suspense is built up in the computer game, by occasionally showing the alien's laser target homing in on the player's character.

Initial gameplay is based around Arnie's attempts to eradicate an onslaught of guerillas, using his many weapons and quite considerable abilities. It is necessary to collect useful objects throughout the game, including the four types of machine-gun featured in the film, which are essential to successfully despatch the attacking force.

At the climax of the game, Tim Best cryptically advises you to 'find alternative weaponry' to kill the alien. As its demise is based on the alien's cinematographic destruction, the biggest playing tip must therefore be to go and see the film!

WIN AN ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS MOTOS ARCADE MACHINE





ZZAP! COMP

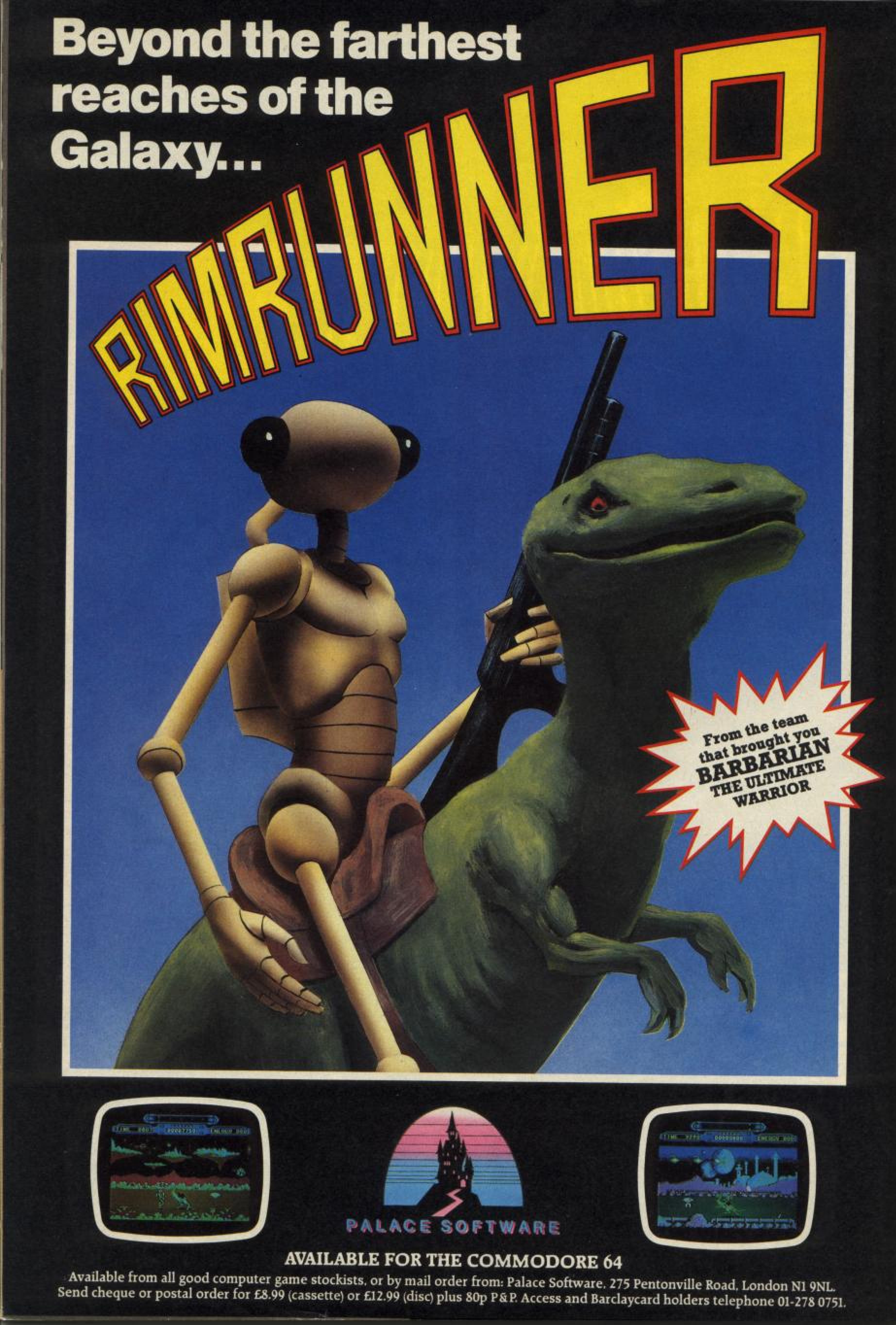
If you paid a visit to the PCW show this year, you just might just have seen the brilliant new coin-op, *Motos*, on the Arcadia/Mastertronic stand. You may also have noticed a sign saying that you could win this machine in the next issue of ZZAP! Well you can, and here it is.

All you have to do to take possession of this great prize, is to find as many words containing four letters and above, from:

MASTERTRONIC

. . . using each individual letter only once. Write them all down, (plus your name, address, and telephone number) pop 'em into an envelope and send them, post haste, to the usual address of: **STREAMCRONIT WORDS COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than 10 December.

The entry which, surprise, surprise, contains the most complete, unhyphenated, proper English words (and yes, we do check them all) will win the first prize of Mastertronic's *Motos* Arcadia machine. Fifty entries that just fail to reach the finishing post will receive runners-up prizes of copies of *Motos* for the 64, so it might be a suggestion to dig out that nice dictionary that aunt Mabel gave you three Christmases ago . . .


Beyond the farthest reaches of the Galaxy...
RIMRUNNER
From the team that brought you BARBARIAN THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR
PALACE SOFTWARE
AVAILABLE FOR THE COMMODORE 64
Available from all good computer game stockists, or by mail order from: Palace Software, 275 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NL.
Send cheque or postal order for £8.99 (cassette) or £12.99 (disc) plus 80p P&P. Access and Barclaycard holders telephone 01-278 0751.

WHAT'S New

BRITAIN'S BRIGHTEST COMMODORE MONTHLY! ZZAP! 64 December

RETURN TO SENDER



Phoenix Ltd have recently released the 'Videosender', a compact unit that is plugged into a VCR, satellite TV receiver or computer, and transmits the signal to a TV set without the need for a separate cable. Attached to a 64, it enables the user to place the computer anywhere in the same room (or even a separate room) without being tied to the short FM lead. The unit is quite powerful, and is capable of sending a signal to several televisions around the house, rather like a mini transmitting station!

The Videosender, which costs around £35, has only been available in Britain for a few months. A full review will appear in the next issue of ZZAP! – just in time for Christmas!

US VIDEO ACES TRUMPED



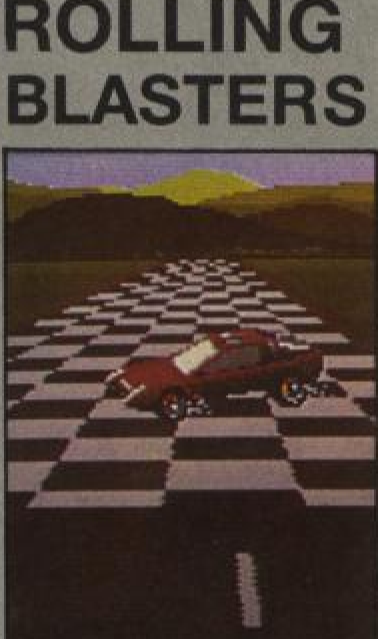
In a tournament held during the PCW on September 27th, the American National Video Games Team battled a British 'A' team comprised of ZZAP!'s very own Daniel Gilbert and Julian Rignall, Ian Machin of C&VG and Tony Horgan of Sinclair User. The US team have never been beaten in a tournament and were hot favourites to win the competition.

The final was played out on Arcadia's new *Rockford* arcade machine, with each player having five minutes to clock up the highest score. At the end of the competition, the team with the highest combined score was to be declared the winner.

Both Julian and Dan played extremely well, each scoring over 22,000 points, with Ian and Tony managing 14,000 and 12,000 respectively. The combined UK score smashed the Americans', and the British team was declared the winner! However, American Donn Neuart was awarded the accolade of 'International Player of the Year' for attaining the contest's top score, with Dan coming second, and Julian a close third.

A return match has already been planned, and the 'A' team will be flying out to Las Vegas in January to battle it out at the CES show, the American equivalent of the PCW. See you there!

ROLLING BLASTERS



US Gold have managed to obtain the licence to release conversions of the classic Atari coin-ops, *Rolling Thunder* and *Roadblasters*.

Rolling Thunder is a thrilling spy adventure where the player, armed with only a revolver and a few rounds of ammunition, enters the factory lair of an evil maniac to rescue a kidnapped girl. Every step of the way is fraught with danger, and the maniac's many minions constantly attack. On later levels, panthers, grenade throwers, 'Masker Blue' spirits and the maniac himself prove deadly foes.

Roadblasters is a furturistic racing game where other cars are blasted off the road rather than overtaken. The player's car is armed with a machine gun, and extra weapons are flown in by 'plane as the race progresses, including shields, nuclear bombs and 'Nitro' injection which makes the car accelerate to an incredible speed. It's a fabulous arcade game, but we'll just have to wait and see if the 64 version can successfully capture its spirit.

US GOLD PRICE CUT

In the latest move against software prices, US Gold have decided to drop all their current 64 disk software (retailing at £14.99) to £11.99, which should please many disk drive owners.

Richard Tidsall, Product Marketing Manager for US Gold, said the reason for the price cut was '. . . . due to the economies of scale of production, which have been added on for the end user.' Basically, this means the more you make, the cheaper they become. Let's hope other companies follow suit.

SHOWTIME AGAIN

The tenth *Personal Computer World* Show proved to be yet another record breaker, with an increased number of exhibitors and record-breaking attendances of 72,783 individuals – over 80,000 with repeat visits!

Inside the Olympia it certainly seemed like there were more than that, with constant 'people jams' and the main stairs having to be closed because it virtually collapsed under the sheer weight of eager punters! At times we wondered what on Earth we were doing there . . .

Believe it or not, preparations are already under way for next year's *PCW* Show, where it is expected that games will be more heavily emphasised than ever before – but for those who were unlucky enough to miss it this time around, here's what happened . . .

TELECOMSOFT SIGNS GRAFTGOLD

One of the most notable occurrences of the show was the signing of a contract between Telecomsoft (which owns Rainbird and Firebird) and the programming team, Graftgold. The men in question are Steve Turner (author of *Ranarama*) and Andrew Braybrook (*Uridium*, *Paradroid* and *Morpheus*). These are soon to be joined by the *Zynaps* duo of Dominic Robinson and John Cumming, again both from Hewson.

Graftgold's Turner said 'negotiations have been proceeding for some time, and we're very pleased at the outcome. John and Dominic have joined us from Hewson, and this contract will allow us to develop the programming team. It won't be long before we're a major force in software development.'

The only effect, as far as 64 owners are concerned, is that the release of *Morpheus* could well be delayed for some time. We'll keep you posted.

Still on the Telecomsoft stand, future 64 releases included the impressive *Io* from the Scottish team of Doug Hare and Bob Stephenson, and the conversion the successful Taito coin-op, *Flying Shark*.

Incidentally, an interesting point is that Firebird's *Druid*, has become so popular, that it's now being converted to the Japanese Nintendo system!



▶ **The tenth PCW slowly begins to fill up . . .**

OCEAN

Ocean had a huge stand which was packed with arcade machines and TV monitors, but surprisingly few game demos. One of those making an appearance was a brilliant 64 version of the finger-

blistering *Combat School*. More news of that next month!

Ocean's catalogue of future presentations resembles other houses' available software list, and videos on the stand constantly ran promos for *Madballs*, the impressive looking *Platoon*, Denton Design's *Where Time Stood Still* and *Flash Point*, the new film licence, *Robo Cop*, and *Athena*'s sequel, *Psycho Soldier*.

Also on display was *Match Day II*, which is currently being programmed by *Star Paws* man, John Darnell and Bernie Drummond of *Head Over Heels* fame.

The stand's Imagine section was busy promoting arcade conversions of *Gryzor*, *Rastan* and *Victory Road*, as well as original releases, including *Freddy Hardest*, *Phantis* and *Navy Moves* from Dinamic, the people responsible for *Army Moves* and *Game Over*.

ACTIVISION

Activision's interests were largely represented in the shape of System 3, Electric Dreams and the recently recruited Infocom label.

After Activision's main platform, Electric Dreams was the most prominent with its own stand, complete with extremely loud music and manned by people wearing some particularly snazzy black silken bomber jackets. Several arcade machines were on show, including *Championship Sprint*, *Super Hang-On Firetrap* and *Karnov*, a *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* variant. However, there were no 64 versions on display . . .

Activision itself is releasing *Rampage*, *Knightmare*, *Predator* (see feature in these hallowed pages), *Galactic Games* and an improved version of their undeserved best seller, *Enduro Racer*. Again, 64 versions were lacking, with only a barely playable version of *Rampage* for visitors to get to grips with.

US GOLD

The enormous US Gold stand (complete with kitchen, offices and boardroom) had several coin-ops on display to back up their forthcoming conversions of *Rygar*, *Gauntlet II*, *Out Run* and *720°*.

One of the more unusual releases was *Charlie Chaplin* which gives the player a chance to direct their own silent movie. Only a promising Atari ST version was on show, but apparently the 64 version is going to be very close.

The American software house Epyx, was also represented on the stand, but only *Street Sports Basketball* was on show for the 64. Atari ST *Impossible Mission II* had its debut and looks extremely good, and apparently a 64 version should be finished before next month. We live in hope!

GO!, US Gold's latest label, has several major releases due out before December including *Wizard Warz*, *Bravestarr* and a game based on the *Lazer Tag* light guns, which are claimed to be the best-selling toy in the US!

The new label also has the rights to three Capcom arcade games: *Sidearms*, a two-player *Salamander*-style shoot 'em up, *Speed Rumbler*, and the popular *Bionic Commando*.

Besides its games releases, GO! is also distributing Mattel's Nintendo console in the UK – a sign of the software houses' increasing interest in non-software projects.

ELECTRONIC ARTS AND CRL

Destiny is a new software house set up by Francis Lee (formerly of Starlight) whose first release will be *Titan Find*, described as 'A tense, all-action arcade strategy adventure game, featuring fast, fast action'.

CRL, now distributed in the UK by Electronic Arts, has *Jack The Ripper* (whose infamous murders are, by a strange coincidence, a century old this year), *Traxxion*, *I-Alien*, *Vengeance*, *Jet Boys*, *Mandroid*, the follow-up to *Cyborg*, *Thunder Cross* and *Lifeforce*. Wow!

Electronic Arts had plenty of games on display, including *Skate or Die*, *Mini Putt*, the very impressive *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* and *Pegasus*, a hydrofoil simulation.

MICROPROSE

One of the most impressive stands at the show belonged to Microprose, due to the overwhelming presence of the rather splendid flight simulator promoting *Gunship*. This was a standard Apache flight sim, customised to run the PC version of the helicopter combat simulator.

All of Microprose's latest games were prominent, with pride of place going to *Gunship*. Soon-to-be-released games included the latest aircraft simulation, *Project: Stealth Fighter*, and the innovative *Airborne Ranger*.

ARIOLASOFT

Ariolasoft's numerous labels have a large collection of up and coming titles for the 64. Magic Bytes have a spoof Olympic games simulation in the shape of *Western Games*, and 1988 should see *The Pink Panther* and *Tom and Jerry* on the same label.

Viz Design has *Werewolves of London*, which should be hairy affair, and Reaktör has a new shoot 'em up in store called *Out of this World*. Also in the pipeline is *Bushido Warrior* and a forced 3D isometric perspective puzzle game, *Ziggurat*.

The Starlight label has but a single release – a graphic adventure based on a poem by Marc Pierson, called *White Feather Cloak*.

DOMARK

Domark's stand was in a quiet and shady corner of Olympia, where Directors Dominic Wheatley and Mark Strachan lounged resplendent in blazers and straw boaters.



Fun-loving Mark Strachan (left) and Dominic Wheatley (right) flank Jeffery Archer and R2-D2 on the Domark stand

Diminutive Jeffrey Archer graced the stand with his presence on Wednesday to promote the new game of his book, *Not A Penny More, Not A Penny Less*. The equally short R2-D2 was there too, promoting *Star Wars: The Computer Game* – yes, at long last someone has actually licensed the coin-op. The Atari ST version looks particularly impressive, but whether or not the 64 will be able to capture the flavour of the coin-op original is another thing entirely.

Also demonstrated on the Domark stand was a set of TV licences which are soon to appear on the new TV Games label, including *Krypton Factor*, a revamped version of *Blockbusters*, *Countdown*, *Bullseye* and *Treasure Hunt*.

AND THE REST

Just when you thought old Pacman had retired to the country, Quicksilva go and give him a new lease of life. Yes, Pacman's back, only this time he isn't going around gobbling dots – in *Pac-Land*, he's helping a lost fairy get home to fairyland! The graphics and sound are certainly looking promising, but we'll just have to wait and see whether it plays as well as the original.

Argus Press Software were busy previewing Amiga and ST versions of *The Hunt For Red October*, a submarine simulation based on the novel by Tom Clancy. The 64 version is currently in developement and sounds very promising.

Mirrorsoft announced the 64 incarnation of *Andy Capp*, a veteran of the Mirror newspaper. Martech previewed the November release of *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix* and also *Sláine*, based on the *2000 AD* character.

Palace Software were busy promoting the *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit*, which, if you hadn't already noticed, has earned itself a yellow gong this month. Other titles in the pipeline include the very promising *Rimrunner* and *Barbarian II*!

Piranha was a year old at the show, and celebrated with a tankfull of live, goldfish-devouring piranhas. A wide variety of impending releases were also being shown, including 2000 AD tie-in *Judge Death*, a scrolling shoot 'em up called *Gunboat*, *Roy Of The Rovers* and *Trapdoor* sequel, *Through The Trap Door*.

Virgin were fairly busy, but nearly all the games on display should be out and about by the time you read this. Future releases include *Scruples* on the Leisure Genius label and *Diplomacy*, which is set for a new year release.

Novagen were in force with demos of their ST games, *Backlash* and *Damocles: Mercenary II*. Unfortunately we'll have to wait until mid '88 for the 64 version . . .

Endurance Games were showing off their heavily publicised board game, *Eye*, and Addictive released – wait for it – *Football Manager II*, a sequel to one of the biggest selling computer games of all time.

It was certainly an interesting show, and although there were some very impressive products on display for the 16-Bit machines, the 64 seems to be going from strength to strength. The next twelve months are certainly going to be interesting ones – see you at the eleventh PCW show.

CALL IT A SEQUEL...
AND YOU'LL LAND UP FLAT ON YOUR BACK.



Commodore Screens





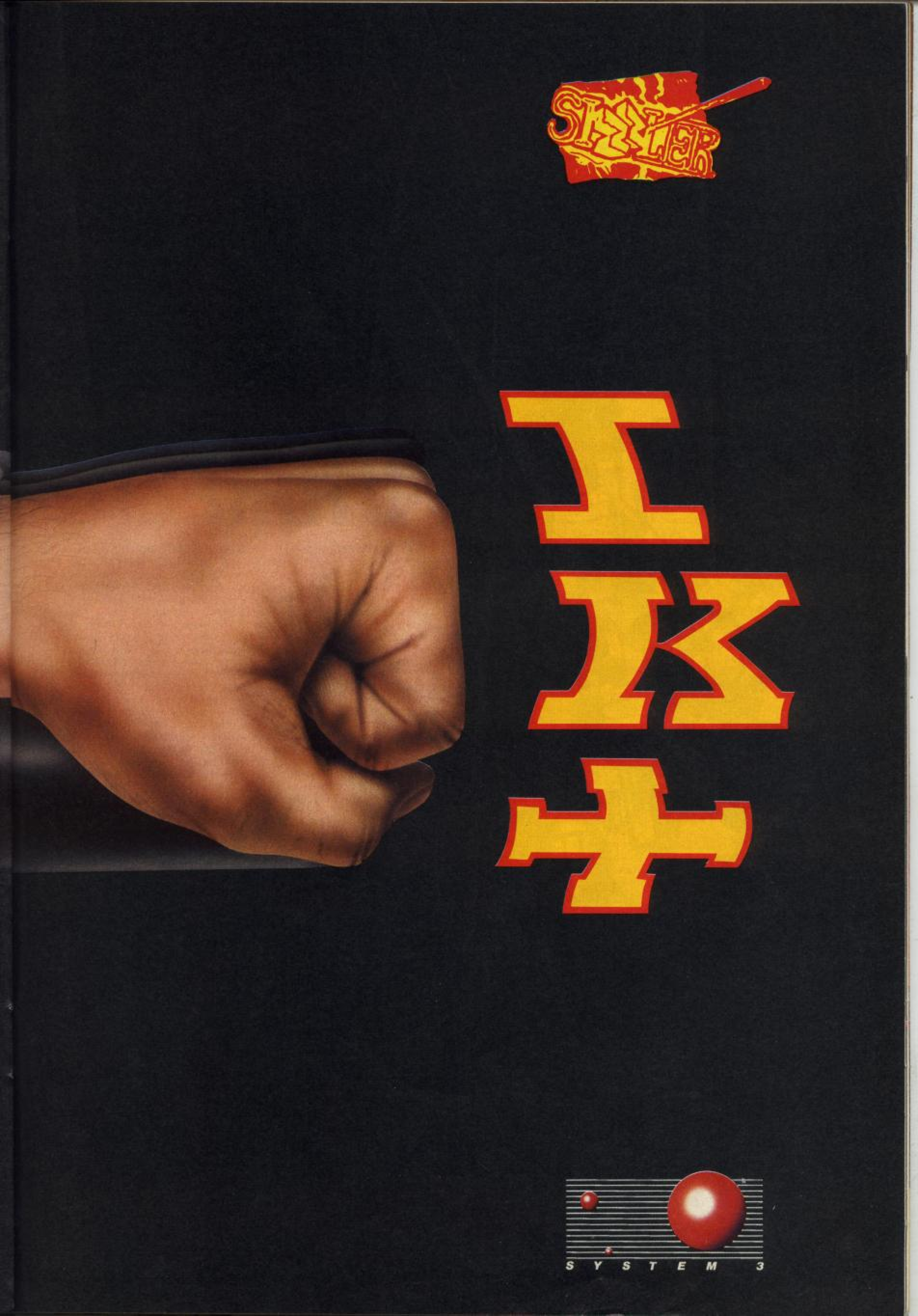


They called International Karate the best beat-em-up so far. And who are we to argue?
But Archer Maclean has come up with a stunner: A Third Fighter.
Amazing animated background. New moves. Re-mixed music.
And Balls!

Commodore 64/128 Cassette (£9.99) and Disk (£12.99). Coming soon for Spectrum and Amstrad home computers.

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Access, Visa and American Express Cards welcome.

Distributed by Activision (UK) Ltd.


SIZZLER
IK+
SYSTEM 3

MANOEUVRES

With Philippa Irving



PONDERING THE FUTURE

I was at the PCW show for only one trade day, so I didn't get a chance to meet any readers of the column. But, I did do the rounds of the strategy-producing software houses to see if anything exciting was in the offing, and one thing that struck me was that the Americans were there in force. That's not surprising when we're told that strategy games enjoy far more popular support and rake in much more money in America, and I hesitate to condemn it as a bad thing as American strategy games are usually pretty good. The voluble and enthusiastic presence of the American strategy promoters certainly contrasted with the invisibility of British based companies. There are, of course, a few dedicated British strategy publishers whose commitment I don't doubt, but what worried me was the fact that software houses who have been known to offer the odd strategically orientated game really didn't seem to be interested in promoting anything for the future. The Commodore disk owner is probably assured of a steady supply of high-quality American games, but these are notoriously expensive and those who can't afford them, or a disk drive, are left to pick up the crumbs.

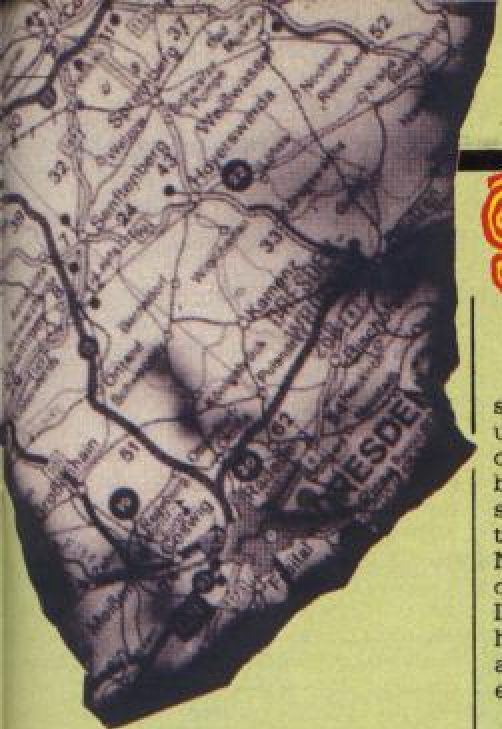
We use the word 'strategic' in a loose way when it's a label to distinguish games in the genre, but applied to the theory of warfare it's a technical term which means only one level of action in a pyramid of five.

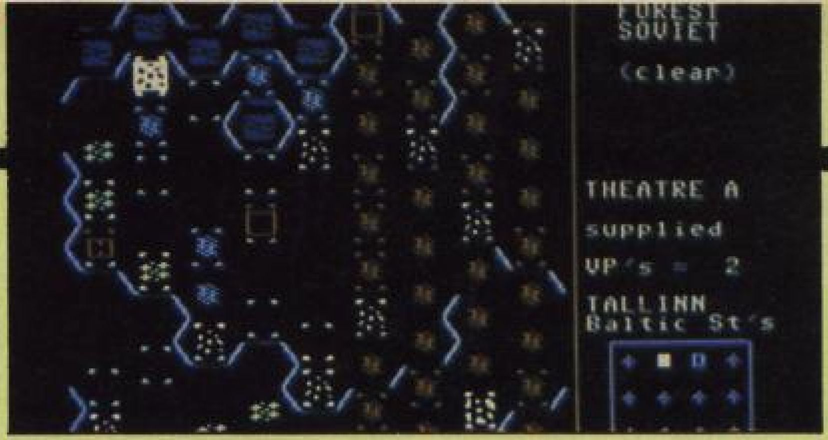
Wargames tend to operate on one or two of these levels. 'Politics' is defined as the determination of a country's foreign policy. There are few wargames which actually give the player a choice about whether the country is going to war; presumably because if he decided not to, there would be no game to play! But there are games which attempt to simulate world management, like *Armageddon Man*.

'Grand Strategy' is the formulation of war aims and policy, and the creation and maintenance of alliances. Alliances tend not to come into solitaire computer games, but board games which simulate entire wars and involve more than two players certainly do. 'Strategy' itself is the planning of the campaign economically and effectively to achieve the grand strategic aims. This is often simulated by the resource-spending screens in wargames, when the player is asked to dish out so many supply points and so many points of air support.

'Grand tactics' brings us to the actual deployment and movement of forces on the field of battle, and it is on this level where most wargames find their main area of play. The level of most detail is 'tactics', and this is simulated in games which recreate a single battle. 'Tactics' is the management of small forces in the field, down to the handling of weapons by individual soldiers. Thus, 'machine simulation' wargames can be said to be almost purely tactical.

In real warfare the responsibility for taking decisions on each of the five levels would rest with different people. Politicians, on the whole, decide what foreign policy will be and whether or not to go to war; generals take the strategic decisions in obedience to the grand strategic objections worked out by the politicians, lower-ranking officers make on-the-spot decisions about the deployment of troops on the field, and the soldier with the gun in his hand makes the ultimate decision to fire. Computer wargames can and do put the player in all these positions except the last, which might in the end be the most important and the most problematic. I wonder if there's a moral in this?





▶ The map for *Russia* is displayed in all its glory

RUSSIA

SSG, £14.95 disk



It was Tsar Nicholai I who passed judgement on Napoleon's failed attempt to invade Russia: 'Russia has two generals in whom she can confide – General Janrier and Fevrier'. It was a lesson of history which Hitler notoriously chose to ignore when he mounted his own invasion in World War II, and the Axis armies suffered heavy losses in the futile struggle against the Russian winter. Over four years, 50 million men fought on the Russian front. According to the introduction in the rulebook of this simulation of the campaign, 20 million of them were casualties.

Looking at the glossy package of this very traditional wargame from the Australian company SSG, the purchaser is given the immediate impression that this is a quality product of some solity. There's a 72 page rulebook, two shiny full-colour card maps showing the entire area of play with detailed terrain marking, four cards with tree diagrams of the menus that drive the game, a strip of printed labels to make your save game disk look neat, and a form which entitles the first-time buyer to a complimentary copy of the house magazine 'Run 5'. All of this naturally made me expect that when I loaded the game itself I would find something that looked like it had been programmed in somebody's lunch break and took twenty minutes to process the computer's turn. I was pleasantly surprised. On-screen, *Russia* looks like a traditional wargame, which tries to convince the player that army divisions are rectangular, and the speed of computer movement is wonderous.

These are the aesthetics. The game itself aims to recreate the entire four-year Axis campaign against the Russians, starting in 1941 and lasting for 48 month-long turns. To ease the baffled player into this feat of wargaming endurance, there are three shorter scenarios which, in the usual nature of these games, concentrate on smaller, specific battles. The three smaller scenarios allow you to take control of a particular army 'group', North, Centre or South, fighting over a small portion of the map. In the campaign scenario you have control of the whole army and the freedom of much of eastern Europe.

The game is driven by a series of branching menus, which differ slightly between the scenarios and the campaign. The designers were clearly worried that some players might get lost amid the trees, and so diagrams are provided for startup, game designing, and playing. To give some idea of the system's complexity, there are eighteen menus associated with playing a scenario. This is a headache to get to grips with at first, but I found that I familiarised myself with the order of play surprisingly quickly. One chapter of the extensive rulebook takes the player through the first turn of the Leningrad scenario step-by-step, and although this took me about three quarters of an hour to work through, I was able to enter subsequent turns in no time.

After the usual preliminaries of choosing a difficulty level – you can opt for a minor, moderate or major advantage to either side, which is worked out in terms of troop numbers – the player is launched straight into the chosen scenario. The map in its entirity is divided up into twelve sectors, and the scenario takes place on three or four of them (one sector corresponds to what fills a screen). Terrain is represented in an unobjectionable sort of way, but the display is enhanced by the printed map which comes with the package. It is useful too for identifying cities. My one complaint about the screen display – and it's a fairly strong one – is that cities are not shown clearly enough. The whole of the gameplay is centred around the pursuit and capture of cities, and it's very difficult to see them properly on the screen. For some reason they have been drawn as a collection of neutral grey blotches, and blend into the scenery. I would like to see large, solid red beacons!

The units are shown as rectangles occupying a single hex. There's a degree of limited intelligence, and you can see more or less what type of troops your opponent has – whether they're tanks or infantry – but only the controlling player can see the specific classification.

One of the menus allows access to a number of information screens, and you can call up displays onto the map showing the communication value for the hexes, railways lines, the controlling side of each hex, and what the map would look like if it wasn't cluttered up with units. The amount of information available for inspection is formidable and, at first, rather alarming.

The Axis army is divided into three army groups, which can consist of up to six 'armees'. The armees can in turn control six korps. There's a kind of command hierarchy because this can be confusing at first, and the player has to give orders at two different levels. An unusual feature is that you don't actually tell units to go to particular hexes, so you can't fight the enemy by arranging your units in pretty patterns of your own choosing. Each armee is given a general 'doctrine', which determines what its aim will be. 'Main Effort' is the signal for an offensive, and when this is chosen the armee is targetted on a vicinity within seven hexes – less, in adverse weather conditions – for the armee headquarters. Thereafter, until the city is captured or the armee's doctrine is changed, the korps units attached to that armee move forward in an attempt to reach and capture their objective. If enemy units get in the way, they fight them. Their exact course is determined by the computer and is not under the player's control at all.

The armee doctrine can be 'normal', in which case it does little, but is still able to fight well, or it can be ordered to rest, which enable the troops to recover their strength quickly, but puts the korps at a disadvantage if they're attacked.

Once the armee doctrine has been selected, the player gives orders to each individual unit or 'korps'. The range of options open to the korps is determined by what the armee doctrine is, and whether or not the unit is next to an enemy unit. Next to the enemy, a korps whose armee is on 'main effort' can assault, probe, defend or retreat, and the player allocates ground support and air support in points.

The condition of each korps is given in a general way. Surprisingly, there is no indication of exact numbers of men: the state of the unit is described in terms of the troops' combat experience and their fitness. Casualties are given in the battle reports, but there seems to be no way of referring back to this.

Each armee has an individual supply of ground support units which can be distributed to the korps, and the air supply units come out of a general army group pool. If the supply lines of a korps get cut off, they can't replenish their OSPs, but their supply of ASPs is unaffected. The provision of basic supply points is affected by supply lines, too, and a novel statistic is the 'administration' factor. This is an indication of how organised and ready for combat a korps is. According to the instructions, the maximum value of seven means that 'all the forms are filled out and the army camp barber has sharpened his razor'! When the fighting starts, things gradually become more disorganised. An armee can't launch into 'main effort' unless its administrations and supply points are high enough, and low values make them vulnerable.

After adjusting armee doctrines and giving individual korps orders, the player wades back through the menus and hits 'Run 5'. This command seems to be the SSG buzzword, and executes the turn. Battles are resolved, and the player's and the computer units move instantaneously and simultaneously. No staring at the wallpaper – it's over in seconds!

The program provides full facilities to create your own scenarios. Because you can alter almost every single variable, including the point values of cities, with enough patience and interest you can set up for any Russian Front battle. Although I haven't seen a copy, the company magazine 'Run 5' prints statistics for further scenarios.

Everything the full-blooded wargamer could want has been provided in this game, and moreover it's easy to handle once you've learned the system. Nothing interrupts or irritates – except perhaps the choo-choo noise of units travelling by rail – and I found it completely absorbing. Definitely a worthwhile investment.

PRESENTATION 91%
Beautiful physical components, smooth operation and thoughtful touches.

GRAPHICS 75%
Pleasant enough, although the cities are unclear on the map screen.

RULES 90%
A lack of extensive historical information is made up for by the extremely thorough descriptions of the game mechanics.

PLAYABILITY 89%
The branching menu system, once learned, makes play fast and compelling.

OVERALL 91%
One of the best traditional wargames I've seen – thoroughly recommended.

LORDS OF CONQUEST

Electronic Arts, £12.95 disk

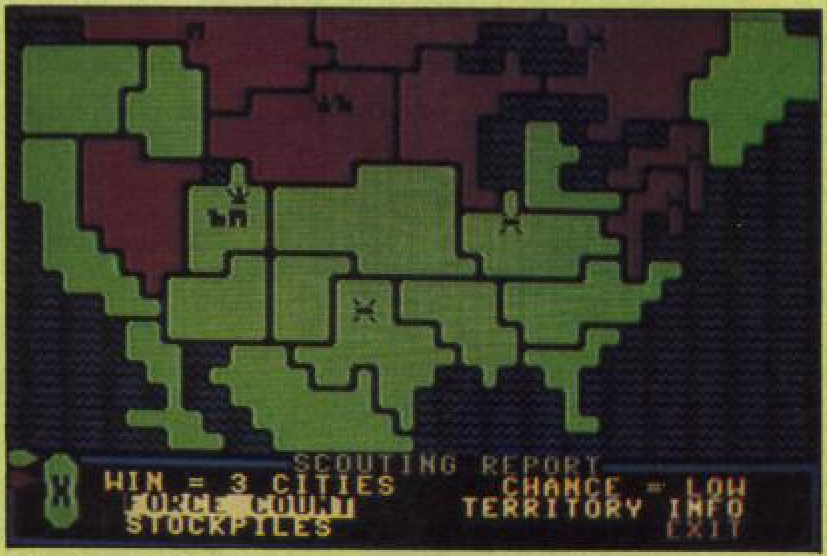
On its back cover, *Lords of Conquest* describes itself as 'a great strategy game'. I'd agree with that. However, I'd hesitate to agree with its other claim: 'better than any board game'.

It is not a war game. Although it concerns itself with conquest, it is of the most abstract kind. *Lords of Conquest* is an attractive attempt at a computer version of the type of glossy board games which keep students who have better things to do with their time dice-rolling and negotiating until four o'clock in the morning. And the designers have made good use of the opportunities for frills, extra bits and easily-adjustable parameters afforded by the computer medium.

Lords of Conquest presents the player with a map – one chosen out of many – which is divided into territories. These territories are under the control of one side or another (the program allows for up to four players). The gameplay concentrates on acquiring territories that were the rightful property of the computer, or one of your friends. If this were an end in itself, things might be too simplistic; but the ultimate aim is to build cities on your own territories by means of wealth generated by those territories which produce resources, so money rather than power is the real name of the game.

There are twenty maps built into the program, representing places like Europe, the Caribbean and the Sea of Japan in a very stylised way. So stylised that it doesn't really make any difference that a handful of the maps are of fictional places like 'Boarderlands'. Some of the maps are single land-masses, but most have groups of territories which are inaccessible except by crossing water.

At the start, the player is given the opportunity to adjust the parameters. This seems to mean the adjustment of a few simple difficulty scales, but the nature of the game is changed quite significantly by the player's choices at this stage. There are five 'levels', which govern how many types of resources are available and what you can use them for. On the 'beginners's' level there are only two resources, gold and horses. On the 'advanced' level, you can have all five resources, gold, horses, iron, coal and timber, and you can build boats with them. Playing on the first two levels, which don't allow boat building, realistically has to be restricted to maps with single land masses. The difficulty scale is a separate quantity, and ranges from 1 to 9. On level 1 the player is given four territories more than the computer, and on level nine, four less.



▶ The stylised *Lords of Conquest* battlegrounds

The player can also choose whether to play with a chance level of low, medium or high. This affects the basic nature of the gameplay too. A low chance level means that the outcome of attacks can always be predicted, and so the game is very severely strategic. A high chance level means, essentially, that dice are rolled. An attack which is numerically stacked against the opponent has a high percentage chance of succeeding, but there is always a random element and any attack can fail – or indeed, succeed. I found it to be more natural and more interesting to play on the high chance level. The rulebook promises a tougher computer opponent on low chance, but the game seems to be designed for dice-rolling.

After selecting for a few minor options, like whether or not to be regaled with music, the player is presented with a blank map and asked to make a choice of territories. Computer and player select alternately until the whole map is claimed, and this part of the game is as important as any other, so much so that first choice of territory is one of the advantages you can select for yourself, and I preferred it to first attack. The safety of a territory depends very much on how many territories of your own surrounds it, so it's a good idea to get your resource-producing areas nicely embedded. The computer's tactic at this stage seems to be to prevent you building up too strong a powerblock, and to place its territories beside any of yours that look valuable.

I played the beginner's level first of all, but soon realised that the game is much more interesting when all five resources are in play. Certain territories, bearing the appropriate symbol, produce resources every turn. During the selection stage the resource-producing territories are obviously the ones to take first, and the game revolves around the capture of the enemy's.

The game is organised into multi-stage turns, supposedly representing years. Firstly, except in the first turn, both sides have the chance to use their resources to build either a weapon, a boat or a city. Weapons are invaluable in combat and cost either two gold or one iron and one coal. Boats can be bought with three timber or three gold. Cities, which win the game, cost four gold or one each of the other resources. Cities are a good buy because they count towards the victory condition, they have an attack/defence value in themselves, and they double the production of their own territories and those surrounding it. You can choose where to site any developed item, and because of the relative immobility of weapons this needs careful thought.

A production phase follows, and you can watch wealth rolling into the computer's coffers or your own. On the high chance level, production might not happen. The reasons given for this are entertaining, and display the cheerfully artificial nature of the game. So far I've seen 'legalistic excesses', 'outbreak of sanity', 'terrible heresies', 'feverish apathy' and 'astounding prophecies' preventing production. I'm still waiting for 'feeble excuses prevent production'!

On the highest game level you can move weapons and horses in the next phase. I preferred to play without this refinement. The restricted movement of the second-highest level seemed to make things harder, and call for more careful planning of strategies. You do get the opportunity to move your stockpile – the territory in which all your wealth is kept – which is advisable if it looks like the enemy might be in position to capture it.

The real business of the game comes in the next phase, which is conquest. Every territory which is bordered by an opposing territory has some sort of chance of being attacked. Its defence value is worked out in straightforward numerical terms, and is determined by how many friendly territories surround it, and whether it or any territories next to it have a horse or weapon or city in them. After a bit of practice it's easy to work out roughly what attacking and defending values are, but you don't have to do it yourself – there's always an information menu available, which tells you the force count of any territory on the map.

In practice, I found that it was a great advantage to be the first boat-owner on the board. The computer doesn't seem to anticipate attacks by boat very well, and if you load your ship with a horse and a weapon, its total attacking value is seven.

The game can be over quite quickly, especially on those maps which only have a few territories. There is no facility to quit a game if you see your position is hopeless, but the computer opponent is adept at it. *Lords of Conquest* is the only game I've ever played in which the computer is programmed to be a bad loser. It abandons a game with surprising abruptness with messages like 'I know I'd win if we kept on, but I've lost interest for some reason' and 'You must have cheated, but I can't see how'. This can get irritating!

When you've played out all twenty maps you can ask the computer to generate a new one randomly or create one yourself.

I have some doubts about the balance of the game – it's too easy to win too quickly – but there's no question that *Lords of Conquest* is extremely enjoyable. The possibility of endless maps doesn't entirely make up for the lack of other varied elements, but although each game follows much the same sort of course I found I could play as many as I had time for in succession and still be eager to load it again. Don't expect a sophisticated wargame, but as a strategy game for relaxation it's addictive.

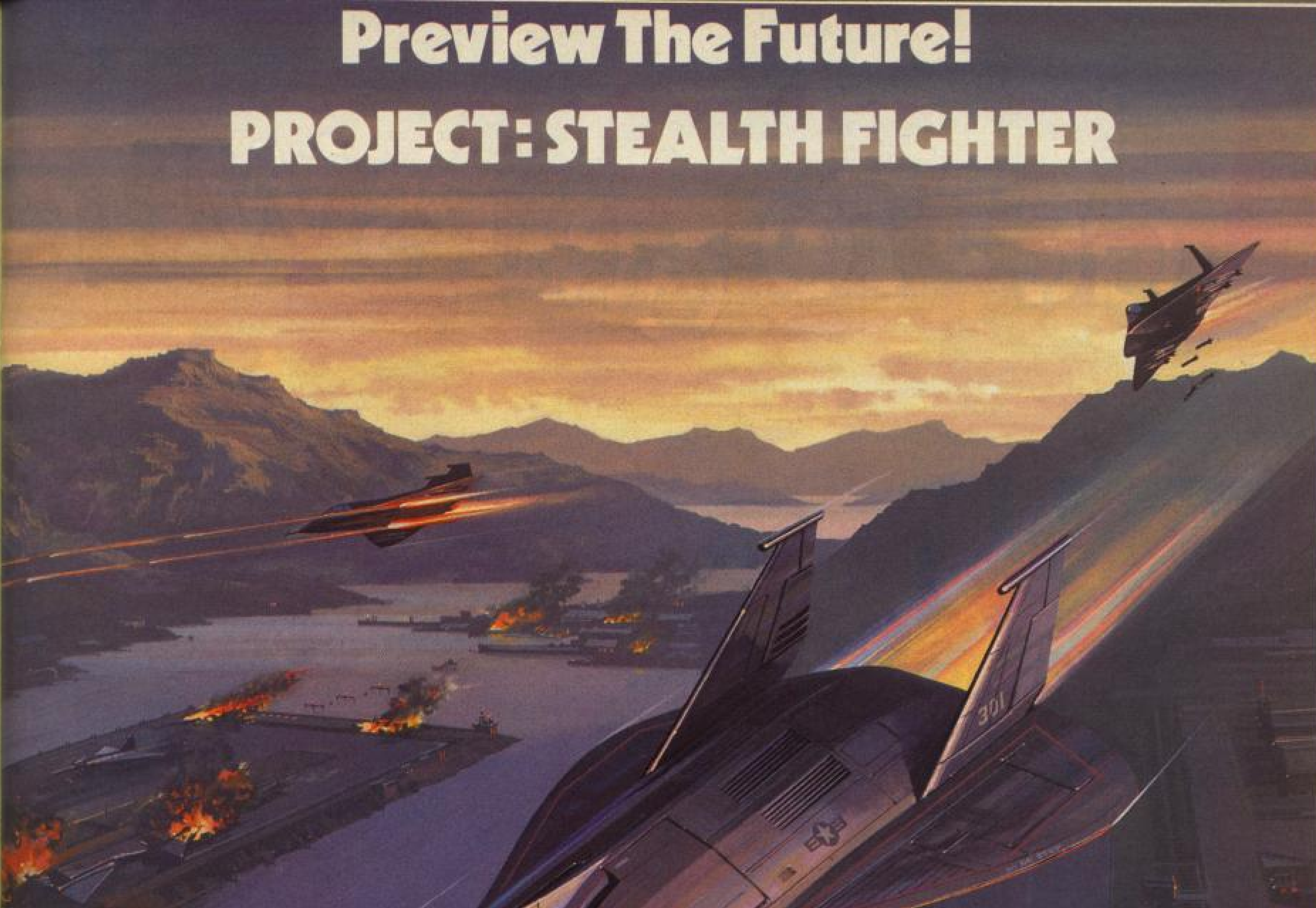
PRESENTATION 80%
Of a high standard, and the irritating jingles can be turned off.

GRAPHICS 69%
Reasonable, but nothing spectacular.

RULES 75%
Adequate, but sometimes a bit difficult to find a specific piece of information.

PLAYABILITY 89%
Very more-ish.

OVERALL 86%
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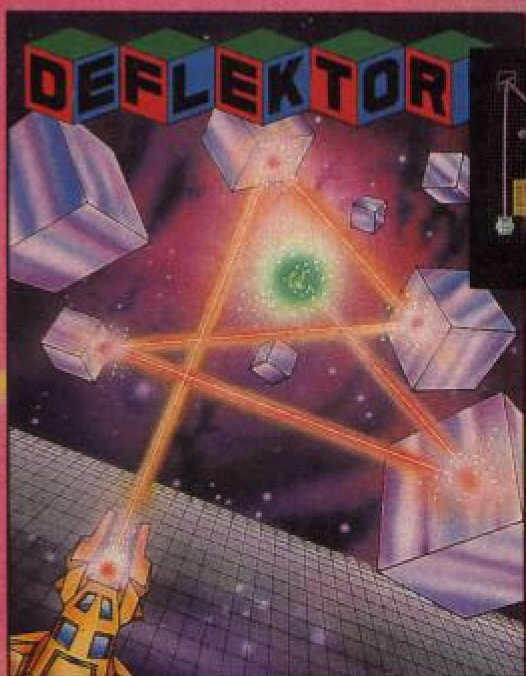
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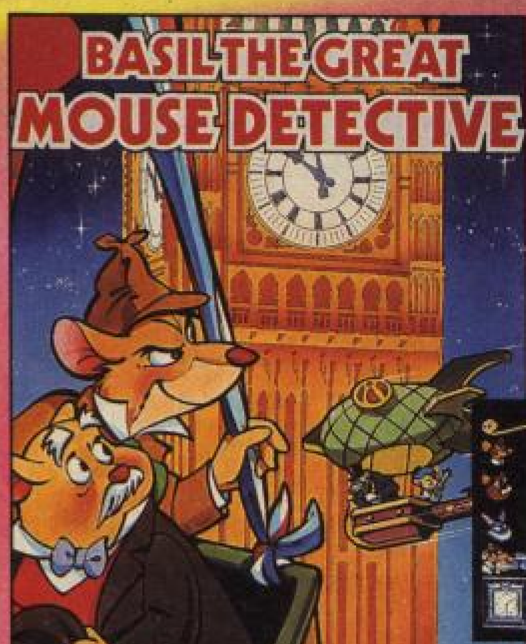




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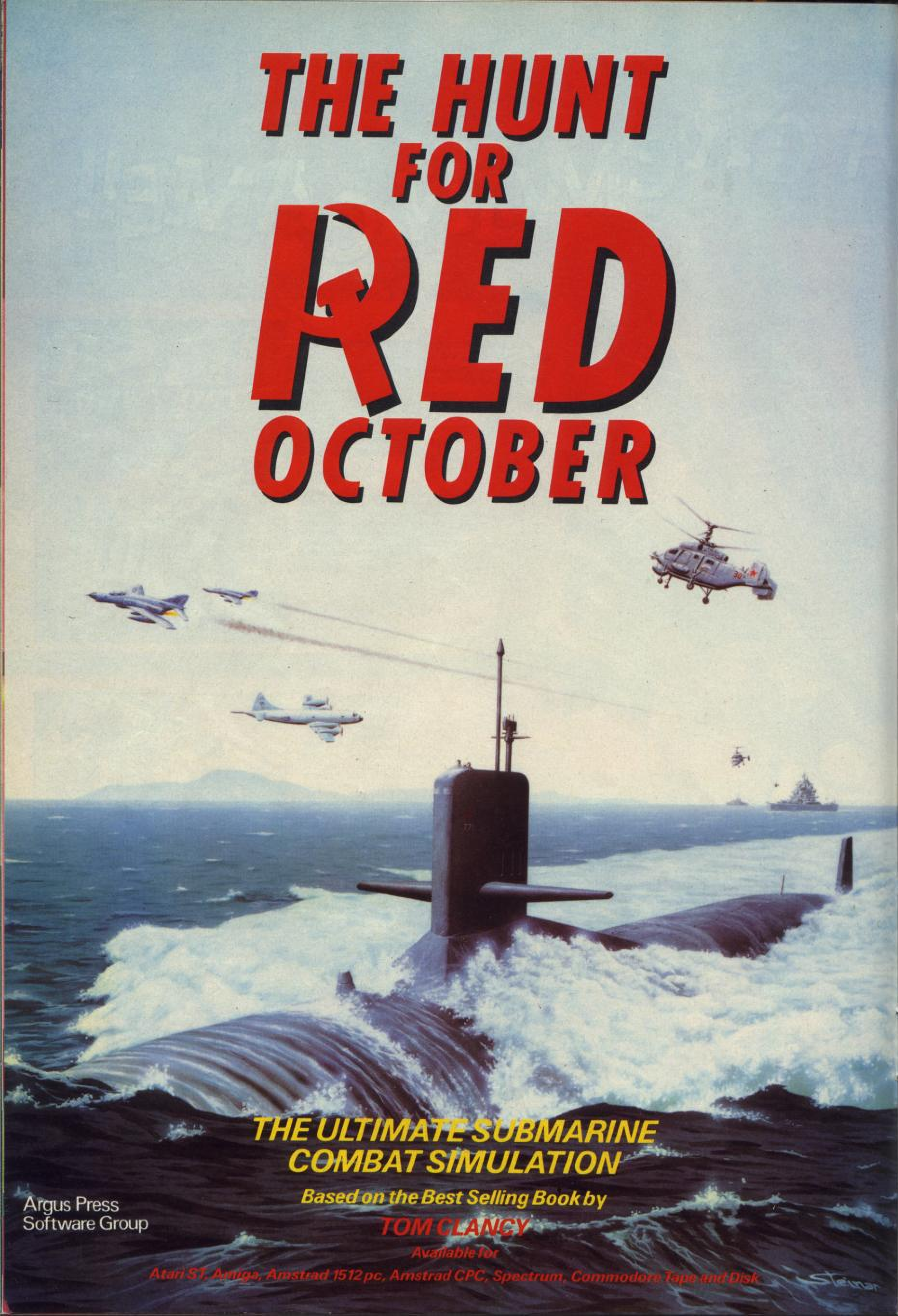


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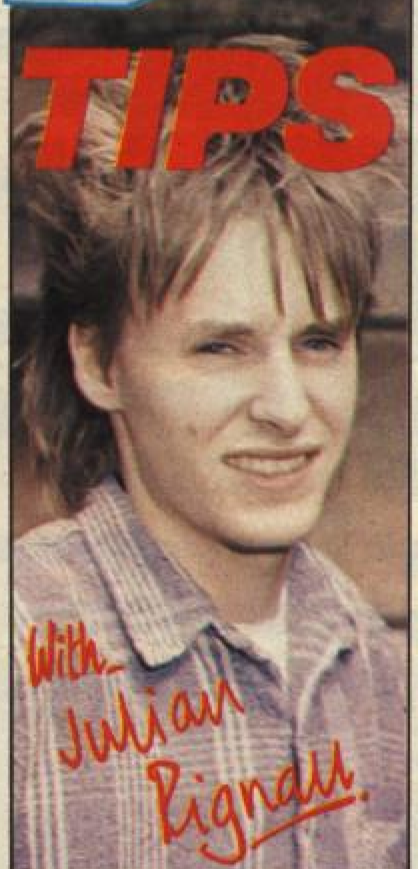
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PRESTIGIOUS ASSISTANCE



I'm afraid it's back to normality after last months mega 3D tips special. It's not all bad though, since there are some useful POKEs to type in during these dark, cold evenings, including a working version of the faulty *Last Ninja* cheat printed a couple of issues back! Hope you find it of use – there were certainly enough complaints!! Let the good tips roll . . .

The following tips are especially for those who've bought the absolutely superb *Lucasfilm Prestige* compilation.

THE EIDOLON (Activision)

This seven headed horror is the dragon found on level eight. He's not at all nice, in fact he's downright nasty. So how do you go about killing him? Well, it all sounds quite simple, but it most certainly isn't. This dragon is a combination of all of the previously encountered dragons, so each head has to be disposed of in the same way as it was before. In other words, start off by shooting the dragon with three red fireballs to get rid of the first head, then four yellow fireballs, followed by five green, six blue, seven red, eight blue and nine red fireballs. Hard work, especially as it's throwing a mega-wobbly and is lobbing copious amounts of fireballs in your general direction!

Watch your energy level doesn't fall too low, try not to panic, and make sure that you have someone tapping away on the space bar to collect any fireballs thrown at you by the dragon, as this is a great help. If all else fails, start praying!



BALLBLAZER (Activision)

Matthew Hodgson of Beckenham, Kent has managed to shut out Droid nine in 34.2 seconds – impressive, eh? Here's how he manages to score so quickly . . .

Just before the plasmorb is ejected into the playfield, move right and stop dead when you are about four squares away from the edge. Push the joystick forward and when the plasmorb enters the grid, go for it. Keep moving forward for a couple of seconds once you have possession of the plasmorb, then veer left towards the goalbeams. With practice you should be able to score every time. Now try it against someone else who's just read these tips for some interesting developments!

KORONIS RIFT (Activision)

Alan Smith of Whitehall, Bristol has come to the rescue of those Technoscavengers who are running into problems on the later levels of the fractal sci-fi epic. Type in the listing, RUN it and follow the on-screen instructions to load *Koronis Rift* with a difference . . .

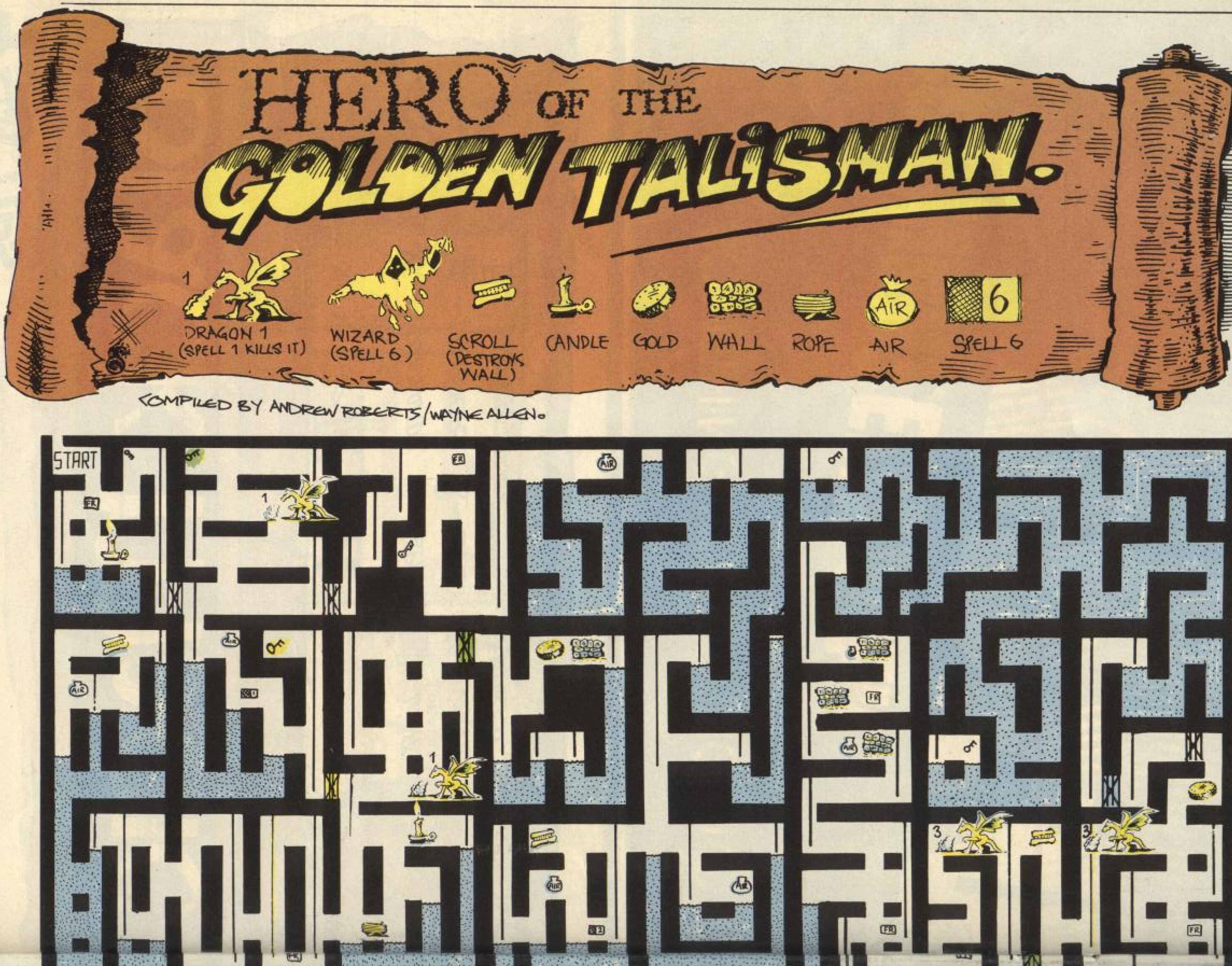
```
0 REM INVINCIBILITY POKES FOR KORONIS RIFT
1 REM BY ALAN SMITH
10 A=320
20 FOR T=0 TO 64:READ Z
30 POKE A+T,Z:S=S+Z:NEXT
35 IF S<>6483 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN
DATA":END
40 PRINT CHR$(147)
50 PRINT "INSERT KORONIS RIFT TAPE THEN
PRESS A KEY"
60 GET A$:IF A$="" THEN 60
70 SYS 320
80 DATA 169, 1, 170, 160, 0, 32, 186, 255
90 DATA 169, 0, 32, 189, 255, 162, 1, 160, 8, 32, 213,
255
100 DATA 169, 76, 141, 242, 3, 169, 102, 141, 243, 3,
169, 1, 141, 244, 3, 76, 13, 8
110 DATA 169, 1, 141, 26, 23, 169, 114, 141, 29, 23,
76, 0, 23
120 DATA 169, 234, 141, 62, 8, 141, 63, 8, 141, 64, 8,
76, 32, 8
```

THE EIDOLON (Activision)

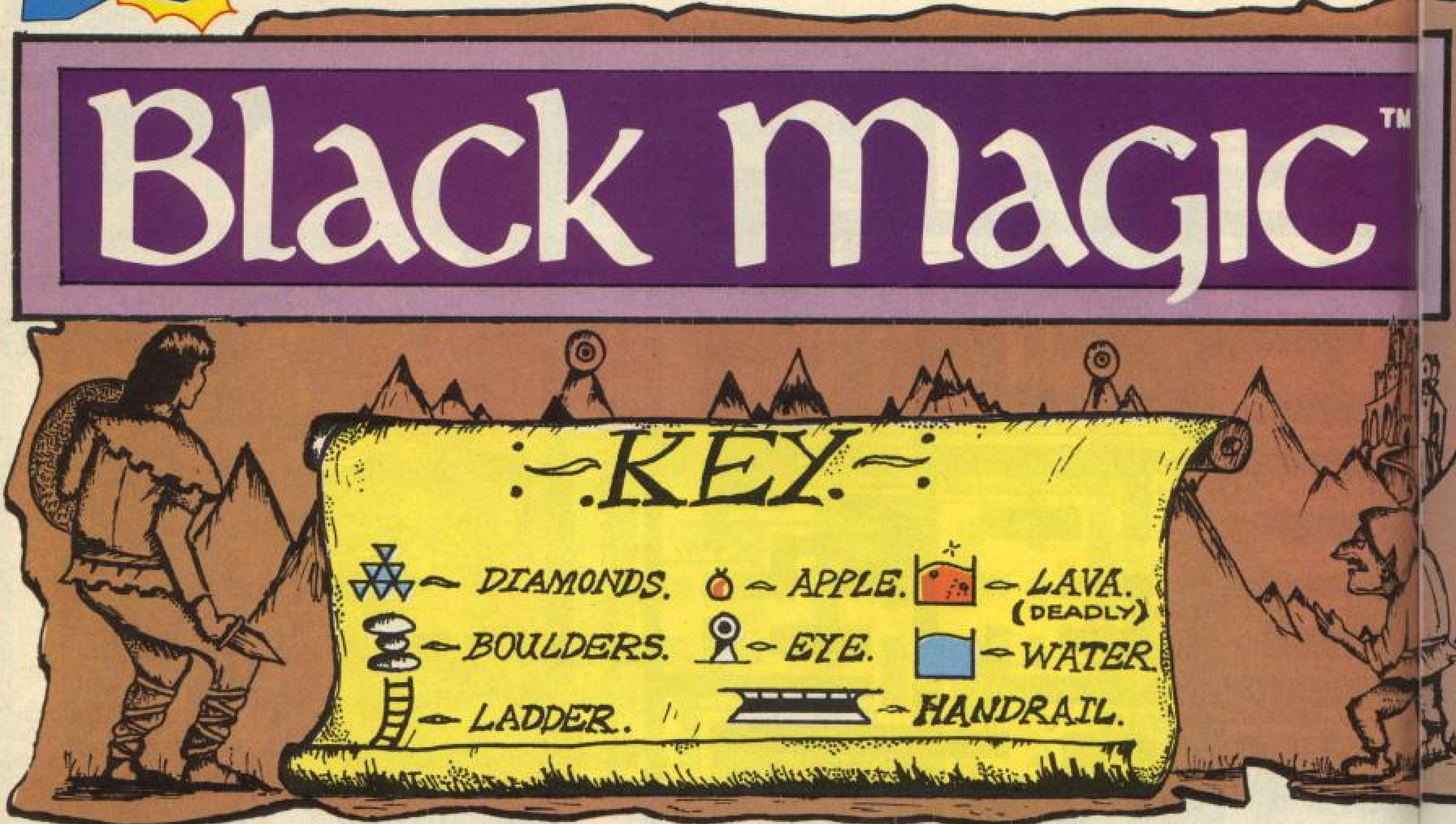
Here's a well fab listing which gives you unlimited energy and unlimited time to bash those 'orrible dragons, courtesy of Cuddly Crix Yates, half of the all-singing, all-guitar playing Sensible Software team. Plonk *The Eidolon* tape into the C2N, type in the listing, RUN it and complete the operation by pressing play on tape.

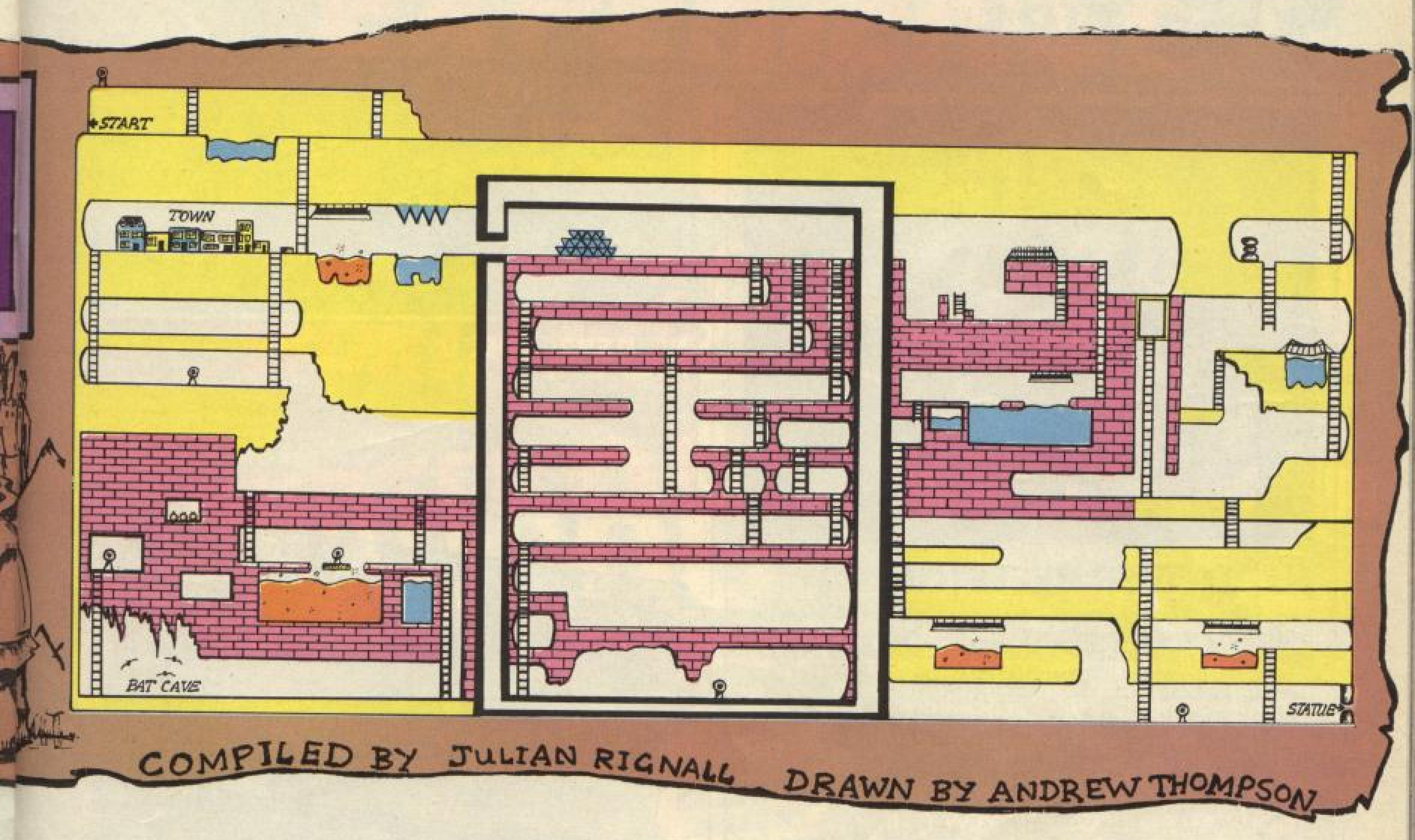
```
10 FOR A=320 TO 383:READ B:C=C+B:POKE A,B:
NEXT
20 IF C6983 THEN PRINT "ERROR! (BLEEP)":END
30 PRINT CHR$ (147) "INSERT EIDOLON,
THEN . . . "
40 SYS 320
500 DATA 169,1,170,160,0,32,186,255,169
510 DATA 0,32,189,255,162,1,160,8,32
520 DATA 213,255,169,76,141,242,3,169
530 DATA 102,141,243,3,169,1,141,244,3
540 DATA 76,13,8,169,1,141,29,16,169
550 DATA 115,141,28,16,76,0,16,169,173
560 DATA 141,238,92,169,205,141,78,115
570 DATA 76,0,76
```



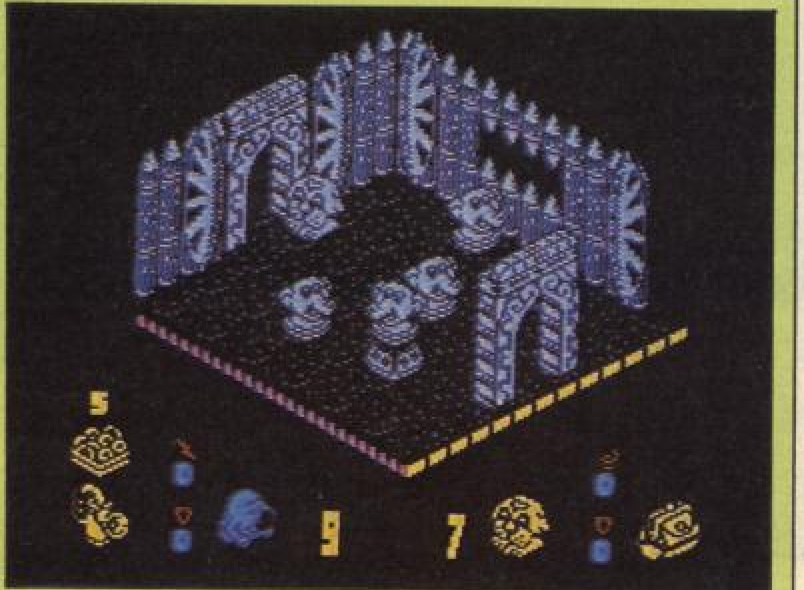


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HEAD OVER HEELS (Ocean)

If you're still having problems with Ocean's brilliant 3D isometric perspective arcade adventure, try out this unlimited everything listing. Just type in the program and RUN it for infinite lives, shields and doughnuts! Thanks to Sean and Adrian Meads of East Oakley, Hants.

```
10 FOR I=53229 TO 53261:READ A:POKE I,A:NEXT
20 SYS 53229
30 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 0, 141, 61, 4,
169, 208, 141, 62, 4, 76, 99, 3, 169
40 DATA 0, 141, 154, 122, 141, 126, 117, 238, 32, 208,
76, 80, 0
```

ZYNAPS (Hewson)

Great stuff! Some really neat POKEs for Hewson's ace shoot 'em up, courtesy of Justin O'Brien of Highfield, Southampton. The trouble with the unlimited lives listing printed a while back is that you still return to the beginning of a level when you die – the following POKEs make things a little easier!

First of all, load the game as normal and reset the computer. If you want boring old unlimited lives enter . . .

POKE 47106,234 (RETURN)
POKE 47107,234 (RETURN)
POKE 47108,234 (RETURN)

However, if you want to progress automatically to the next level when you die, rather than return to the beginning of the current one try out these beauties . . .

POKE 47106,76 (RETURN)
POKE 47107,31 (RETURN)
POKE 47108,184 (RETURN)

Okay, how about progressing to the next level when you die, but still face the same attack waves? Confused? Just enter these and all will become clear . . .

POKE 47106,238 (RETURN)
POKE 47107,33 (RETURN)
POKE 47108,185 (RETURN)

By the way, be careful with these, as the computer crashes after the last level – abort the game before you get that far. If you want to play the same level a couple of times, and then go onto the next one, try these . . .

POKE 32839,184 (RETURN)
POKE 32831,31 (RETURN)

When your ship is destroyed and the blue Zynaps logo is displayed – gently tap the RESTORE key to progress to the next level. Be careful though, as the computer crashes if you press RESTORE at any other time.

When you've made all your changes, restart the game by entering SYS 32768. Fun, eh?

MICRORHYTHM (Firebird)

Have you got a disk drive? If so, do you use Firebird's mini drum machine? You do? Oh good, you can use these Jim Blackler POKEs to enhance your life. Just load the program, reset the computer and enter the following:

POKE 5631,8:POKE 5667,8:SYS 7103

You'll now find that pressing keys F5 and F7 loads and saves (respectively) the song and bars to disk. The only trouble is that all files are called DRUM DATA, and therefore you may only have one per disk side. Still, I wouldn't complain . . .

NONTERRAQUEOUS (Mastertronic)

Thank goodness – some unlimited lives POKEs for this huge arcade adventure. Just load the game, reset the computer and enter . . .

POKE 30424,173 **(For infinite psyche)**
POKE 28399,173 **(For infinite bombs)**

And SYS 30633 to restart. Once again, thanks to Sean and Adrian Meads.



THE LAST NINJA (System 3)

Eeek! There was something wrong with the listing printed in issue 30 which causes the computer to crash. Fortunately Zoltan Kelemen has supplied a fully working one – so that all you ailing Ninjas can kill that elusive Shogun! Just type in and check the listing type RUN and press play on tape. How easy could it be?

```
3 POKE 649,0:FOR I=579 TO 640:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I
4 FOR I=31722 TO 31735:READ A:POKE
I,A:C=C+A:NEXT I:IF C=8876 THEN SYS 579
5 PRINT "ERROR IN DATA"
6 DATA 198, 157, 78, 41, 3, 169, 0, 162, 1, 168, 32,
186, 255, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 120, 136
7 DATA 140, 21, 3, 169, 128, 141, 237, 2, 238, 119,
244, 238, 120, 244, 169, 166, 141, 20, 3, 108
8 DATA 20, 3, 162, 121, 142, 178, 3, 206, 179, 3, 76,
81, 3, 169, 197, 141, 135, 120, 76, 191, 3, 12
9 DATA 0, 0, 169, 49, 141, 159, 2, 169, 234, 141, 160,
2, 96
```

Well, well, well! That's this months ration used up. Next month is the Christmas tips special, absolutely jam-packed with goodies – you lot are so spoiled . . . If you have anything in the way of tips, maps, POKEs or anything you think might be of use to games players, send it in to: ZZAP! TIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB and earn the gratitude of thousands of Commodore owners (and maybe even £20 software if your tips are particularly good). Go for it!!

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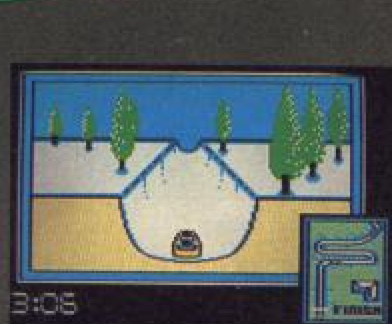
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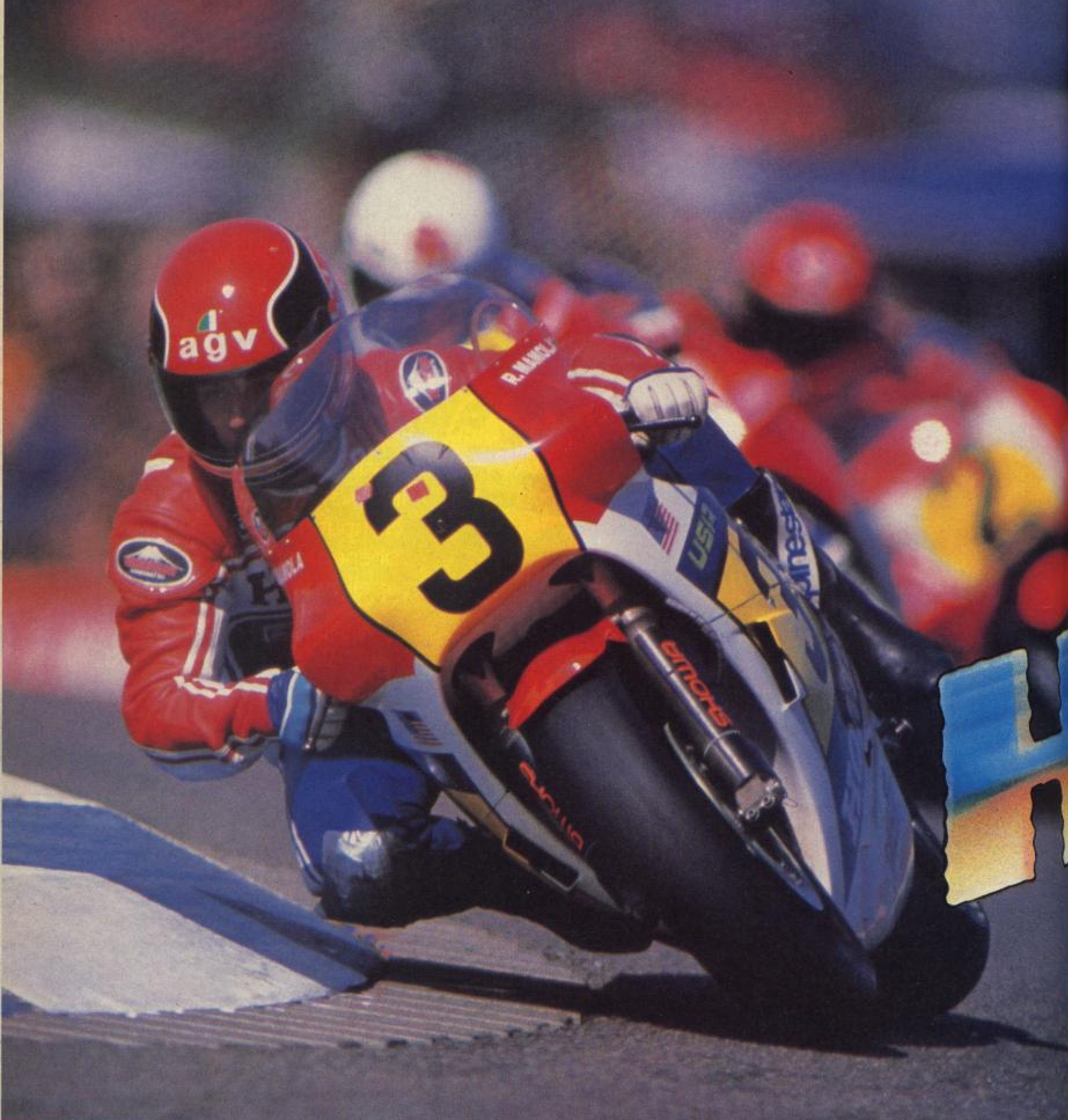




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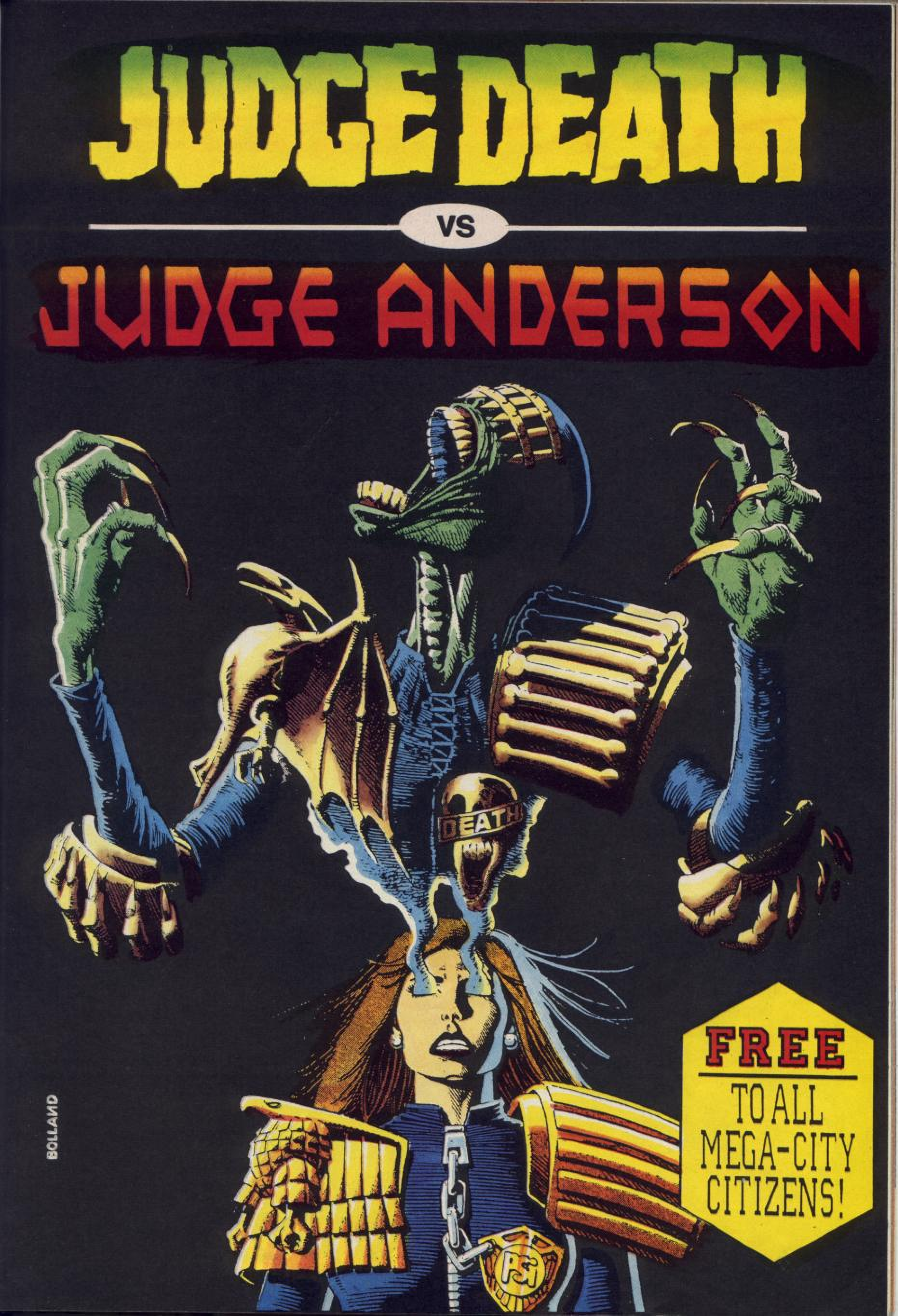
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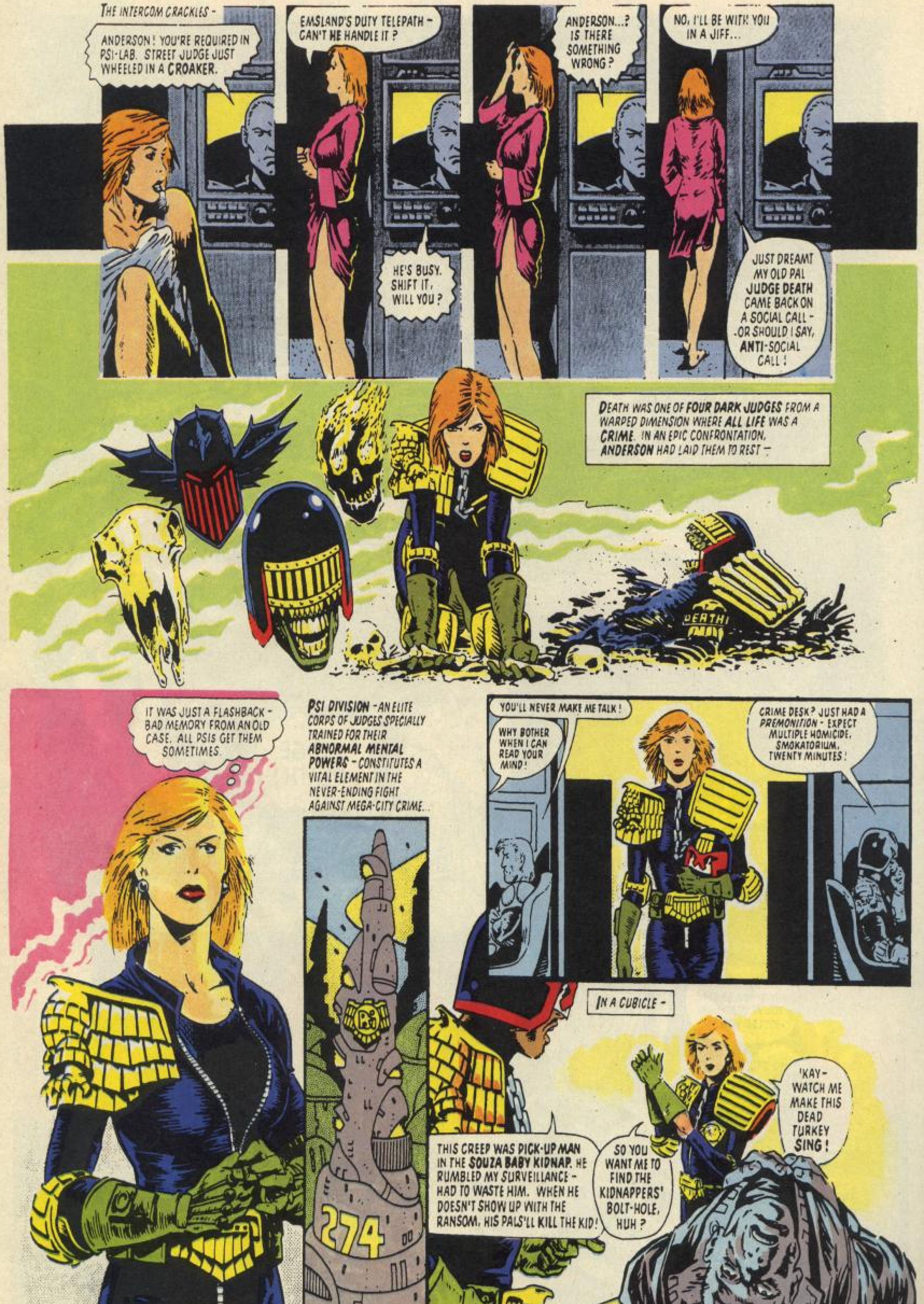
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ANDERSON...? IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG?
NO, I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A JIFF...
JUST DREAMT MY OLD PAL JUDGE DEATH CAME BACK ON A SOCIAL CALL - OR SHOULD I SAY, ANTI-SOCIAL CALL!
DEATH WAS ONE OF FOUR DARK JUDGES FROM A WARPED DIMENSION WHERE ALL LIFE WAS A CRIME. IN AN EPIC CONFRONTATION, ANDERSON HAD LAID THEM TO REST -
DEATH
IT WAS JUST A FLASHBACK - BAD MEMORY FROM AN OLD CASE. ALL PSIS GET THEM SOMETIMES.
PSI DIVISION - AN ELITE CORPS OF JUDGES SPECIALLY TRAINED FOR THEIR ABNORMAL MENTAL POWERS - CONSTITUTES A VITAL ELEMENT IN THE NEVER-ENDING FIGHT AGAINST MEGA-CITY CRIME...
274
YOU'LL NEVER MAKE ME TALK!
WHY BOTHER WHEN I CAN READ YOUR MIND!
CRIME DESK? JUST HAD A PREMONITION - EXPECT MULTIPLE HOMICIDE, SMOKATORIUM, TWENTY MINUTES!
IN A CUBICLE -
THIS CREEP WAS PICK-UP MAN IN THE SOUZA BABY KIDNAP. HE RUMBLED MY SURVEILLANCE - HAD TO WASTE HIM. WHEN HE DOESN'T SHOW UP WITH THE RANSOM, HIS PALS'LL KILL THE KID!
SO YOU WANT ME TO FIND THE KIDNAPPERS' BOLT-HOLE, HUH?
'KAY - WATCH ME MAKE THIS DEAD TURKEY SING!


FOR A SHORT WHILE AFTER DEATH, LATENT IMAGES ARE RETAINED BY THE BRAIN. A SKILLED TELEPATH CAN EXTRACT THEM -
SNATCHERS' LOCATION COMIN' THROUGH - BUT FAINT...
SOMEWHERE DARK... DRIPPING... HIGH RADIATION LEVEL. THERE'S A NAME THERE... FOCUS! GOTTA FOCUS!
IT'S A STREET. CROAK...NO - CROCK...CROCKER. CROCKER STREET!
THAT'S IT, GROGAN. YOUR STIFF'S GONE COLD ON ME.
IT'S ENOUGH. THE ONLY CROCKER IN THE CITY WITH A HIGH-RAD LEVEL IS IN SECTOR 61!
SOON, IN ONE OF THE MANY AREAS DEVASTATED BY THE APOCALYPSE WAR -
WE'VE STILL GOT TO PINPOINT THE SNATCHERS' EXACT LOCATION. I SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAP INTO THEIR THOUGHT WAVES AT THIS SHORT RANGE.
COME IN, NUMBER 9! YOUR TIME IS UP!
ANDERSON CAN'T RESIST HER LITTLE JOKE. NOT NORMAL FOR A JUDGE!
STILL, PSIs ARE HIGHLY-STRUNG. WE'VE GOT TO ALLOW THEM THEIR LITTLE PERSONALITY DEFECTS.
GOT 'EM! THREE OF THE CREEPS - SUB-BASEMENT, WILSON TUCKER BLOCK RUINS.
THERE IT IS!
THE JUDGES DESCEND INTO A MAZE OF DANK UNDERBLOCK PASSAGES -
WHAT THE HELL'S KEEPING HARLEY WITH THAT RANSOM?


PYKE – GO SEE IF THERE'S ANY SIGN OF HIM!
AND YOU SHUT THAT WHININ' BRAT UP OR I'LL BURY HIM, RANSOM OR NO RANSOM!
WAAAA
THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHIN'...
HARLEY! YOU THERE? IT'S PYKE HERE...
WHAPP!
AAAA!
YOUR CRADLE-SNATCHING DAYS ARE OVER, CREEPS!
JUDGES!
AAGH!
THE LAST KIDNAPPER BOLTS THE DOOR –
DON'T TRY TO GET IN, OR THE SOUZA KID'S DEAD! YOU HEAR – DEAD!
WAAAAA!



CONTINUED ON THIRD PAGE FOLLOWING


THE FOUR DARK JUDGES!
THIS CITY ISS GUILTY!
THE CRIME ISS LIFE!
FEAR


JUDGE DEATH
PIN—UP
HE SSENTENCE ISS...
DEATH!
MORTIS
DEATH


UNTIL!
DEAD END! HE'S GONE AGAIN - IF HE EVER WAS HERE!
CAN'T PUT THIS ONE DOWN TO CHOOBACHEEZ! BETTER SIGN MYSELF ON FOR A ROUTINE MEDICAL -
TURN AROUND, ANDERSSSON!
I HAVE COME TO SSTALK THISS WORLD AGAIN. . . AND YOU, ANDERSSON, WILL BE MY INSSTRUMENT OF DESSTRUCCTION!
DEATH
BRETT EWINS



I HAVVE RETURNED TO JUDGGE THISSS CITY!
THE CRIME ISSS LIFE. THE SENTENCCE ISSS DEATHHH!
ALL WILL BE PUNISHHHED!
ALL WILL DIE... DIE... DIE...
ANDERSON! YOU OKAY?
WAAAH!
WAY YOU TOOK OFF BACK THERE, I THOUGHT YOU'D SEEN A GHOST OR SOMETHING!
A GHOST...YEAH, SORT OF. A BAD MEMORY FROM THE PAST. HAPPENS TO US PSIS SOMETIMES.
ANDERSON AND GROGAN HAD BEEN WORKING ON A KIDNAP CASE -
LISTEN, GROGAN, I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO DO. YOU HANG ON HERE WITH THE BABY TILL THE MED-SQUADS ARRIVE.
WAAAAH!
HEY, C'MON! I DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT KIDS. YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS!
ANDERSON!
WAAAAAAAAHH!


ANDERSON, WE'VE GOT ANOTHER VICTIM FOR YOU- JUMPIN' JIGGY JIGGS, THE VID-JOCKEY.
COMPUTER - YOU GOT AN ADDRESS ON JIGGS ?
SUITE 400, CHUCK WINDSOR LUXY BLOCK. THAT'S OVER IN EAST SECTOR 80.
AT CHUCK WINDSOR, A MED-SQUAD IS STRETCHERING OUT A BODY -
JIGGY JIGGS!
WHAT HAPPENED ?
MOST PROBABLY A HEART ATTACK. NEIGHBOURS HEARD HIM SCREAM - FOUND HIM DEAD IN BED.
SET HIM DOWN. I WANT TO TRY FOR SOME LATENTS.
ANDERSON TELEPATHICALLY TUNES IN TO THE RESIDUAL IMAGES IN THE DEAD MAN'S MIND -
AND THE VISIONS THAT ASSAIL HER ARE CHILLINGLY FAMILIAR -
WH-WH-WHADDYA WANT WITH ME, MAN ?
I HAVVE COME TO JUDGGE YOU.
DEATH


B-B-BUT I HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING!
YOU LIVE. THAT ISSS SSUFFICCIENT.
THE SSSENTENCCE ISSS DEATHHHH!
AAAAAAAH!
THEN DEATH IS HERE!
BUT HE CAN'T BE! I MAY BE SCATTY, BUT MY MEMORY'S NOT THAT BAD. I FOLLOWED THE CREEP BACK TO HIS OWN WORLD AND LAID HIM TO REST PERMANENT. I KNOW I DID!
YET JUMPIN' JIGGY JIGGS HERE SAYS DIFF!
ONE THING'S FOR SURE — SOMETHING'S GOING ON. AND I BETTER FIND OUT WHAT.



AT THE GRAND HALL OF JUSTICE IS LOCATED THE BLACK MUSEUM -
BRAIN OF JUDGE CAL.
HERE, ON PERMANENT EXHIBITION, A COLLECTION OF GRISLY RELICS - A CONSTANT REMINDER OF EVIL IN ALL ITS FORMS -
STUFFED KLEGG
THE DARK JUDGES' DIMENSION JUMP. OLD STONEY FACE AND I USED IT TO FOLLOW THEM BACK TO THEIR OWN DIMENSION - DEADWORLD.
4 DARK JUDGES
I CAN USE IT TO GO BACK TO THEIR DIMENSION AGAIN, CHECK 'EM OUT.
NOT EXACTLY STANDARD PROCEDURE, BUT THEN THIS SITUATION'S ANYTHING BUT STANDARD.
I'M GONNA LAY THIS GHOST ONCE AND FOR ALL!
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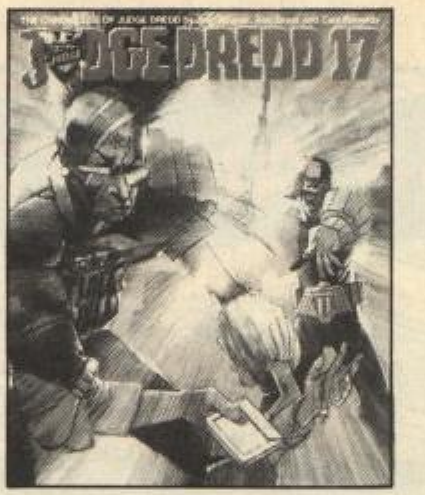
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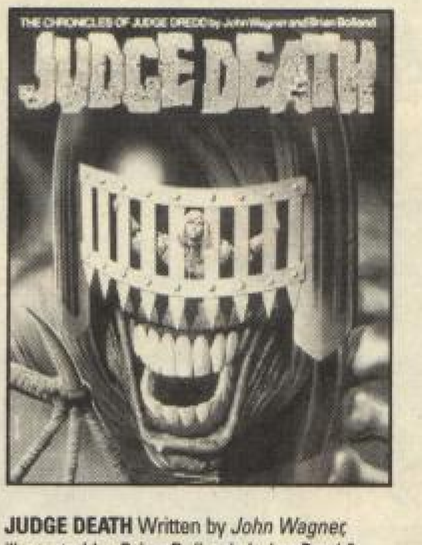
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ZZAP! POSTMARK

with BRENDON KAVANAGH

Winter approaches us once more, and I begin wondering . . . will the beloved Post Office maintain its prompt delivery of 'first class' mail? There again, why should this year be any different from any other? Hmmm. There's no denying that every now and then the odd letter gets mislaid in the postal system somewhere, but it's no joke when that odd letter happens to be your latest order form. There you are, poised to clinch the game (or the next round at least) and your turn comes back 'NMR': No More Received. War is hell, especially when your orders lie in some forgotten corner of a post office that is forever England . . .

NEW GAMES

There have been a number of new games launched recently – none of them particularly cheap, but all quite interesting.

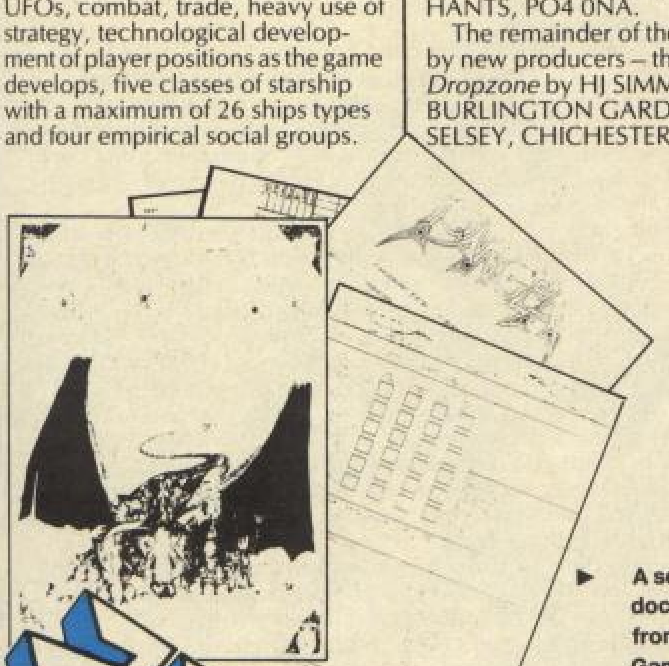
'JADE GAMES' have launched a science fiction 'magazine' by the name of *New Order*, a three dimensional space-based game. Features are numerous, and include large fleets of starships to command, UFOs, combat, trade, heavy use of strategy, technological development of player positions as the game develops, five classes of starship with a maximum of 26 ships types and four empirical social groups.

The rulebook is huge – and I couldn't hope to condense it enough to make any sense to you. If the rulebook is anything to go by, *New Order* seems to be a well thought out game which could prove to be a lot of fun. Further details are available from JADE GAMES, PO BOX 54, SOUTHSEA, HANTS, PO4 0NA.

The remainder of the games are by new producers – the first being *Dropzone* by HJ SIMMONS of 30 BURLINGTON GARDENS, SELSEY, CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX PO20 ODP.

Dropzone is (according to Mr Simmons) a PBM game that simulates an assault by the 'Terran Mobile Infantry' on a hostile alien planet. It seems a good idea (but isn't there a computer game by the same name?) and the rulebook is a very good read. Send Mr Simmons an SSAE for further details. I must admit that I fail to see where any multiplayer 'bits' come into the game, though.

Possibly the best packaged game to come my way for a long time has to be *Pangea* by ANVIL GAMES. It's a very promising fantasy game where the player becomes a character in a strange world. I must say that the game designers have put a LOT of work into it, and have created a whole woriu for the player to enjoy. A long history, different races, languages and types of magic are all carefully documented in the rulebook. If you enjoy a bit of roleplaying, perhaps you should write to Anvil at THE OLD FIRE STATION, QUEEN STREET, GODALMING, SURREY, GU7 1BD.



▶ **A selection of the documentation from Anvil Games' *Pangea***

TIPS FOR TRYING TO JOIN A GAME

1. If you don't know much about the game, send the GM a large SSAE and ask for a copy of the rulebook for you to study. This way you can see for yourself what the game is about, and whether or not it appeals to you before paying for start-up.
2. NEVER send cash through the post – always use a postal order or a cheque. If a letter containing cash gets lost in the post, you never see that money again, but you can always stop a cheque.
3. BE PATIENT. Many games require a fixed number of players to start, so the GM may not get in touch with you until the game is full and ready to start. So don't worry!

SUBTERRANIA

PRODUCER: Tim Lomas, 221A Amesbury Ave, London, SW2 3BJ
START–UP FEE: £6 (inc first five turns)
COST PER TURN: £1.50

Subterrania is an interesting game which Tim Lomas has been developing for some time. It's a deadline out and out strategy war game (a mixture of force meets force which is defended by force), which is moderated on a Dragon Computer (remember them?). The player takes control of the Queen of a hive of ants in a 3D maze of tunnels and halls (3x10x10). The objective is to control the inhabitants using mental power. The only problem is that other Queens want your hive as their own nest, so your ants are used in battle against the opponents'. Should two or more groups of ants meets at a location, the computer uses its secret calculating method to figure out who is the most likely to gain the location, retreat under losses, or even die . . . An interesting concept, I'm sure you'll agree. Lose your Queen's hall and you lose the game – it's as simple as that.

THE MAP

As I've already said, the game is three dimensional in design. Only a few tunnels exist between locations, and at the end of each turn only one players' ants may occupy any one part of the map. There are few vertical tunnels, but such locations are real treasures if you can find AND hold them. Once you've conquered your own level, you can easily move on and try another!

HOW DOES THE GAME WORK

Right then: what have we so far? There are 300 locations linked with a variety of tunnels. We have, at the start of the game, a small number of Queens, all with a small number of ants under their control. Each location is capable of 'incubating' ant eggs, thus each turn your army increases with a set number of ants. Worth remembering!

Using a simple 'orders' form you instruct your ants to attack any location within reach, and so gradually build up your empire. Two types of battles exist: the most obvious is where two opposing ant armies move to the same location at the same time. They, quite obviously, fight until one lot retreats. The other type is a rather clever idea: The Tun- ▶

nel battle. Here, you have two locations linked by a tunnel. Player 1 owns the first location, and player two the second. Instead of a simple swapping of locations, the ants fight over the tunnel between the locations – a good idea, that.

THE OBJECTIVE

The objective is, in rulebook terminology, 'not to lose'. This is done by either defeating all opponents, or gaining control of 151 locations, which isn't easy at all.

OTHER FEATURES

Subterrania has other features not mentioned so far: organiser ants to boost your strength in battle, the strategic grouping of ants in tunnels to send blasts of energy into an adjoining locations (destroying its occupants) or into a wall to make a tunnel. Ants may also block tunnels, shield themselves against those energy blasts, and generally be quite handy when you are attacked from an unexpected quarter where you just happen to have enough ants to defend that location . . .

TO PLAY

This is a real thinkers' game. There are only a limited number of ants available, so you must decide the best places to distribute them for maximum offence and defence. They're all purely logistical problems, and if you think you could handle such tricky decisions which (in the end) only involve a few numbers anyway, you could well enjoy this game. The only point against it is the cost: £1.50 per turn. It could be cheaper when compared with the value *Spiral Arm* offers, but this doesn't stop it from being a brain itcher of a Play By Mail game.

SPIRAL ARM

PRODUCER: (UK) Spellbinder Games, 7 Turners Court, Benson, Oxon, OX9 6QH
START–UP FEE: £2 (inc. first three turns)
COST PER TURN: £1.30, additional charges for sundry items not essential to gameplay

Spiral Arm is a very popular and well respected Sci-fi strategy wargame which throws together computer moderation, economics, strategy and diplomacy into an intriguing stew of galactic goings-on. Let the rulebook tell the story . . .

'The present state of affairs arose with the climactic and rapid destruction of the Empire by an extremely potent alien virus. The central fleet was then destroyed while defending the galaxy from an alien force. With no power to exert a controlling influence, and with xenophobia at an all-time high, the galactic civilisation crumbled into an anarchic state of affairs. Knowledge was lost, much history destroyed and many worlds were wiped out. Sufficient remained however, to build space ships and to use the established system of Hyper-Space Portals (HSPs). The makers of these portals have all died out, and their mechanics remains a mystery.

That said, every world is connected to the galactic grid of these portals and can be reached by using RSP, but not necessarily by a direct route. Players don't know the destinations of HSPs unless they win the planet of origin, hence they begin the game with one planet and the destinations of all HSPs leaving that planet. As players gain more worlds, they add to their knowledge of the galactic grid's map.'

Quite a scenario! The player is given a world equipped with such game entities as a population, colonists, transportation, raw materials, industrial units, an environment and a 'cash' income level per turn. It's through wise deployment of these economic goods that starships of various types and capabilities may be built with which to explore the galaxy, and hopefully to conquer it! A nice touch is that the player can choose to be one of eight races, including Humanoid, Reptilian, Ameoboid or Robotic.

TO PLAY

I must confess that I haven't actually played this game, but after talking with a few of Spellbinder's customers I am considering it. *Spiral Arm* is rated very highly as a PBM game, and is played by many people. It seems to be a fairly flexible game to play, and there's plenty of space to be explored – and at £1.30 per turn, there's little to moan about!

THE LETTER!!!

This month I've received a letter, so here it is in all its glory.

Greetings Brendon,
Nice to see that finally a PBM section has been set up in ZZAP! 64 – it's much better than some of the other sections I could mention.

I was amazed at the price some companies were prepared to charge for a turn, £1.50 or £2.00 is much too expensive for what you receive, not to mention start-up costing a fiver. If PBM companies bring down the cost by at least half, I'm sure that it would prove more appealing to the majority of prospective PBMers.

I myself take part in a PBM game and I must say that after trying others I found it to be the best of all. It runs on the scenario of an island packed with bloodthirsty trolls, all trying to gain supremacy in their own devious ways. The cost is a mere 90p per turn (usually about 4 feet long) and your actions card is processed and returned immediately, much better than a week or a fortnight turnaround, I feel. the GMs are also very friendly and will answer most questions.

Making alliances and planning moves is one of the most enjoyable parts of the game. I am a member of an alliance who have so far dominated the game (several alliances are run): we are known and feared as the Skullcrackers Union and compete with other groups of murderous Trolls for the winning places each round. The game, incidentally is called *Trolls Bottom*.

I find the best thing to look for in new games are the start-up price, the scenario and whether or not a computer printed turn sheet is wanted. Many may feel disappointed with a handwritten reply: as you say, computer printouts can give a good atmosphere, especially in a Sci-fi game. The choice is up to the players – you want something? You'll probably find it somewhere in the PBM world!

Best of luck with POSTMARK, and a big HI to all Skullcrackers . . .

Guldrum, Game 2, Trolls Bottom.

Thank you, Guldrum – a very interesting letter with which I agree entirely. I must point out that although some games cost a lot to play, they can be very enjoyable. What must be considered is the amount of time to GM puts into running the game when one is assessing its cost. Trolls Bottom IS a very enjoyable game – I receive a lot of mail about it for the CRASH PBM MAILBOX section – yet they cut costs by using a very efficient processing system (codes on a turn sheet methinks), ideal for the game. Games with a slightly larger 'fantasy' approach require some element of human moderation. That extra bit of depth can't be given by computer moderation, so in such games the player sadly ends up with paying for that extra bit of time the GM puts into the processing. You pay for what you get, you see. Many thanks for writing in.

BK

If you wish to air your views, by all means write in. If you're lucky, I'll print your letter, and if you're really lucky, you might even win a T-Shirt! What are you waiting for? Chuck your letter into an envelope and send it off to: ZZAP! PBM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.
See you soon.

BRENDON KAVANAGH



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THE BALANCE OF POWER

These days it seems impossible to mention the words 'Amiga' or 'Atari ST' without sending someone into paroxysms of rage. From then on, you're not likely to get any sense from the injured party . . . In an attempt to bring a balanced view of the 16-Bit situation, ZZAP! takes a step back and looks at both machines, their history and capabilities and gives programmers of both machines a chance to air their opinions.

COMMODORE AMIGA



Early in 1985 the ailing Commodore company bought the rights to the Amiga project from ex-Atari Jay Miner, much to the displeasure of Jack Tramiel, who had only recently bought Atari (the legal wrangles continue to date).

With rumours of an Atari 16-Bit based machine, Commodore were under duress to release the Amiga and, as with the ST, the first batch to surface were rushed, having a bug-ridden operating system that loaded in from disk.

While Atari targetted their machine at the lower end of the market, the Amiga, complete with impressive graphics and multi-tasking capabilities was pushed as a business machine-cum-executive toy. It is generally regarded that Commodore got it completely wrong, and while the Amiga floundered in the no-man's land of the 'serious amateur', Atari's ST was busy building up a strong public following and a similarly large software base.

Initially, the Amiga appeared as the A1000, looking every bit the serious computer, complete with a colour monitor perched atop the hardware case, separate keyboard and a mouse. Sales were rather poor and the decision was made to release the more compact and considerably cheaper A500, which appeared in the Autumn of 86.

The A500 saw the first real attempt at taking Atari on at their own game, with the hardware, keyboard and disk drive contained in one case. Unfortunately a standard TV modulator was still in omission, leaving the necessity of a monitor.

The Amiga uses the Motorola 68000 16/32 bit processor, running at a clock speed of 7.14 MHz. This is a touch slower than the ST, but more than makes up for this deficiency by the addition of multi-tasking custom chips which handle many graphics features on their own, leaving the main processor to run the bulk of the program. Screen resolution has four modes: 640x400, 640x200 and 320x400 with 16 colours (chosen from a palette of 4096 colours) and 320x200 which can support up to 32 colours on-screen. There's also a 'hold and modify' (HAM) mode which displays all 4,096 colours on-screen, although it only works with static pixels.

Musically, the Amiga is superb, with four, nine-octave FM stereo sound channels, and a novel built-in speech synthesiser. The A500 also has eight hardware sprites, hardware scrolling and a bit Blitter for the high-speed transfer of data.

The machine that members of the public are most likely to get their hands on, can be obtained for around the £460 mark, which includes the A500, mouse, external TV modulator and some bundled games and blank disks.

ATARI ST

News of Atari's first steps into the world of the 16-Bit home computer market came in the summer of 1985 when, following the launch of Commodore's Amiga, Jack Tramiel announced the impending release of the ST in direct competition to Commodore's new wonder-machine.

The ST, according to rumour, had been in development even before Tramiel started at Atari, but apart from the internal hardware designs, little else had been produced. An operating system was still needed, as was a usable front end and some form of BASIC.

The built-in software used is a version of CPM/68K, renamed TOS (Tramiel Operating System). A Graphics Environment Manager (GEM) was purchased from IBM, and the BASIC was hastily obtained from Metacomco, a British 68000 company, who were also responsible for AmigaDOS.

Atari were so keen to release the machine that the first production models required the user to load the 200K TOS from disk before it could be used. New machines have a de-bugged version of TOS on ROM.

Late 1985 saw the first appearance of the standard Atari 520 ST in Britain. Unfortunately, it also needed an external disk drive and a colour or monochrome monitor, as no TV modulator was present. This didn't stop the machine selling in substantial quantities, mainly due to Atari's fierce marketing campaign.

Since then, the original version has been superceded by the STM with TV modulator, STFM with modulator and built-in disk drive and the 1040 ST with one-meg memory. Recently Atari have released a new breed of super STs, complete with blitter chip and 2Mb and 4Mb memories.

All versions utilise the Motorola 68000 16/32 bit internal processor, which runs at a clock speed of 8 MHZ (slightly faster than the Amiga). The screen display has three modes of resolution: 640x400 pixels, which can only be used in conjunction with a monochrome monitor, 640x200 pixels with four colours on-screen, and the normal 'games' mode of 320x200 pixels with 16 colours. All colour selections are made from an internal palette of 512.

Recently Atari have announced plans of a new super add-on based around the Inmos T800 Transputer chip, which turns the ST into an incredibly fast mini-computer. A 32-Bit Blitter chip handles the graphics, supporting

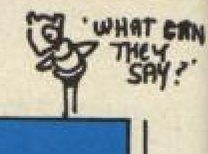


16 million colours (yes, 16,000,000) on the lowest resolution 512x480 screen. It certainly sounds exciting, but we'll have to wait until June 1988 before the finished product can be seen.

Musically, the ST is poorly catered for, since the sound chip is the same as the one used in the Spectrum 128 and Amstrad CPC range. There are three separate eight-octave sound channels and a separate white noise channel. However, the addition of MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) ports allow direct access to any MIDI compatible synthesisers. There's plenty of MIDI software on the market, and the machine is used by many professional musicians, including Midge Ure.

Pricing is one of the Atari's strong points, with a complete and ready-to-run 520 STFM currently retailing around the £260 mark. A 1040 STF with 1Mb drive retails at around £480.

16-BIT



WHAT THE PROGRAMMERS SAY . . .

To present a (hopefully) balanced account of both machines, the ZZAP! team interviewed several programmers who have been hard at work with both the Amiga and Atari ST. The first lamb to the slaughter was **John Darnell**, programmer of *Dragon's Lair*, *Escape from Singe's Castle* and *Starpaws*, who has been working on an Amiga for a couple of months.

He has strong feelings about the way the Amiga has been marketed. 'Commodore botched it' exclaims John. 'The whole thing is very reminiscent of the 64 versus Spectrum fight of a few years ago. The 64 was obviously the more powerful machine, but while Commodore pushed it as a potential business computer, Sinclair was quite happy selling the Spectrum to the general public and creating a huge software and user base.

'There's no doubt that the Amiga is a more powerful machine – it's absolutely incredible and it will be years before its full power is touched. The ST is good, but it just doesn't have the same potential.

'The main argument is the price. Joe Bloggs in the street goes into a computer shop and sees both machines. They're both labelled as 16-Bit, but the ST's sitting there with a £299 price tag. His choice is obvious. Basically, the Amiga hasn't been marketed properly. That's not to say that it will flop, though – it's too good a machine.'

His grievances don't only lie with Commodore's marketing: 'Their support for the Amiga is pretty bad. They spent millions developing an operating system that no-one needs and which is still full of bugs. In fact, there's an American magazine called *Byte* who run a 'Bits' network (similar to Compunet) and everyone spends their time on it discussing the bugs in the Amiga operating system! If you go via the OS, you lose 20% of your processing time, so you have to ditch that. If you do want to learn how to use the machine, you have to spend another £110 on the equivalent of the 64's programmers guide, and then you have to read it all at least twice! I went to the Commodore show, and said to the people on the Amiga stand, I don't want the operating system. I was looked upon as something of a heretic!'



Next, we spoke to **Peter Johnson**, author of ST *Arkanoid*, who's currently working on Atari and Amiga versions of *Wizball*.

'The ST's power lies entirely in the 68000,' he says. 'It's a bit like the Spectrum, where everything has to be done via the CPU. This means that most ST games will be slower than the equivalent games on the Amiga. The main handicap of the ST is the screen layout which makes scrolling difficult to achieve. You have to store large chunks of the graphics in memory and manipulate them before printing them to the screen, which takes up a lot of memory and processor time. You can cheat, of course, by limiting the number of colours or reducing the number of (software) sprites and making the playing area smaller. The sound chip is pretty bad too, but one way around this is to have a MIDI output so that people with MIDI synths can hear the music that way. *Arkanoid* does that.

'In the future, new techniques will certainly evolve, but the lack of internal hardware in the ST means that there are no things to perform tricks with, like sprite multiplexing or sprites in the border.'

Andy Onions and **Ian Oliver** from Realtime Software, programmers of Spectrum *Starglider* and Rainbird's forthcoming *Carrier Command*, also agree with this. 'First of all, you have to realise that the ST is much cheaper and simpler. There's little assistance from the machine when you write a game – it's just a big screen. Creating sprites and the suchlike is also down purely to the power of the processor. To save processing time, we always write direct to the hardware, ignoring the operating system. The OS on the ST is abysmal – but it works. Oddly enough the majority of software houses are leaving the operating system on . . .

▶ **Ian Oliver and Andy Onions of Realtime Software**





'The Amiga is just the opposite: it does it all for you. Technically the ST has no advantages over the Amiga – with the possible exception of the disk drive and a fractionally faster clock. But then, you get what you pay for. If the Amiga was the price of an ST, no-one would be buying STs. The A500's a beautiful machine, but priced wrongly. You can now get an ST for the price of a Spectrum +3. No-one in their right mind would buy a new 8-Bit machine these days, and the + is totally overpriced. We don't know how Atari do it. At the price, it's a bargain.

'The main problem at the moment with the Amiga is the software base: the games are still expensive and it will take time to increase the amount of users. It's the development time that costs. We could knock cheap games out in three weeks, but they'd be rubbish. Then again, we've already seen some full-price rubbish on the ST. The price of games has a large influence on the sale of the machine. The Amiga might be caught in the same trap as the 64 was when it first came out. The hardware was expensive, so the software was priced accordingly. Then the price of the 64 came down, but the software remained the same. This could happen to the Amiga.'



Graftgold's **Andrew Braybrook** is a staunch Amiga fanatic and launched into the discussion saying: 'It annoys me when people say the Amiga and ST are similar. The Amiga has loads of custom capabilities while the ST has little extra chip support. The ST has the opportunity for a Blitter upgrade, but you can't write for it until everyone has one.



▶ **Andrew Braybrook hard at work . . .**

'Writing software is a totally different ball-game. The ST is effectively 'empty' and you have to fill it up, whereas the Amiga has lots of potential for writing to the built in custom chips. You have to obey the rules of the operating system, which involves hacking your way through the expensive manuals.

'Time is a major problem: it took about 1400 man hours to write *Morpheus*, which only filled 64K. How long will it take to utilise all the available space of a half meg? You have to have more than one man on each game, and use utilities. You can't really do graphics in hex, so development software is also important.

'At the moment Amiga games tend to be converted from the ST, but neither one is being pushed at the present time. Games aren't as polished as they should be and Amiga owners are snobbish: they don't like to see their machine doing things that others can do! Both machines should be comparable until around the end of 1989, but after that the superior graphics of the Amiga will lend itself to polished arcade conversions while the ST might go for games which rely more on number-crunching. The Amiga will be a true arcade quality machine, and the ST more of a thinking man's machine.

'I'm certainly glad that both machines are around. I don't want to see either disappear. There's plenty of competition which pushes the programmers along.'

Finally, we spoke to **Steve Bak**, whose extensive 16-Bit works include *Goldrunner*, *Jupiter Probe*, *Karate Kid II* and *Battleships*. He admits 'the operating system on the Amiga is really bad. The first thing I do when working on either machine is to completely destroy the OS, so that it never interferes with the program that I put in. In this way I can save 80K on the ST and 100K on the Amiga.

'I can certainly understand the debate that surrounds them. I mean, who's going to spend four or five hundred pounds on a machine and then say it's a load of rubbish? I disagree with the 64 and Spectrum analogy though, a closer comparison would be to the 64 and Amstrad.

'I'm sure that the ST will be more successful in the long run. Atari are right behind the machine. Atari's boss knows what direction to go in, and his staff know what direction to go in – the technical support is brilliant.

'Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about Commodore: they still insist that the Amiga is mainly a business machine, and are actually discouraging the production of games. I phoned Commodore and asked about a development pack for the Amiga. I was working for Microdeal at the time, and the reply I got was, and I quote, '*if you have games in your catalogue we will not sell you a development kit*'.

'From a programming point of view the Atari is faster than the Amiga. Metacomco's assembler runs about 50% faster on the ST, due to the clock speed – the Amiga's complicated operating system slows it down. The Amiga has the Blitter, but it isn't as impressive as Commodore would have us believe. When the Blitter is running, the main processor can't be used, and it's only useful for moving large objects around, rather than, say, small lumps of graphics for scrolling.

'There are other things like speech. The Amiga handles it better, but at the expense of memory. The 40 seconds of speech in Goldrunner takes up 140K on the Amiga, but only 46K on the ST.

'A main disadvantage of the ST is the single-sided disk drive. The Amiga's drive is double sided, so we can put twice as much data on one disk, as we did for *Karate Kid II*, which had eight backdrops instead of four. It's also more economical since we save on the cost of a second disk.

'Without doubt, the Amiga is the ultimate games machine (whatever Commodore would have us believe to the contrary), but I look at each machine from the inside out. I'm not really interested in their value, only what I can sell as a games writer. In that case, the ST comes out tops. ST software is outselling Amiga software by about four to one at the moment. You can buy an Atari STFM cheaper than a 64 and disk drive, and the 1040 ST is about the same price as the Amiga. At the end of the day, the most important difference is the cost.'

In this article, we have tried to remain unbiased, while still presenting the advantages and disadvantages of each machine. The programmers we spoke to offered their own opinions, and while some readers may disagree with their thoughts, this article is not intended to kindle a debate. ▶

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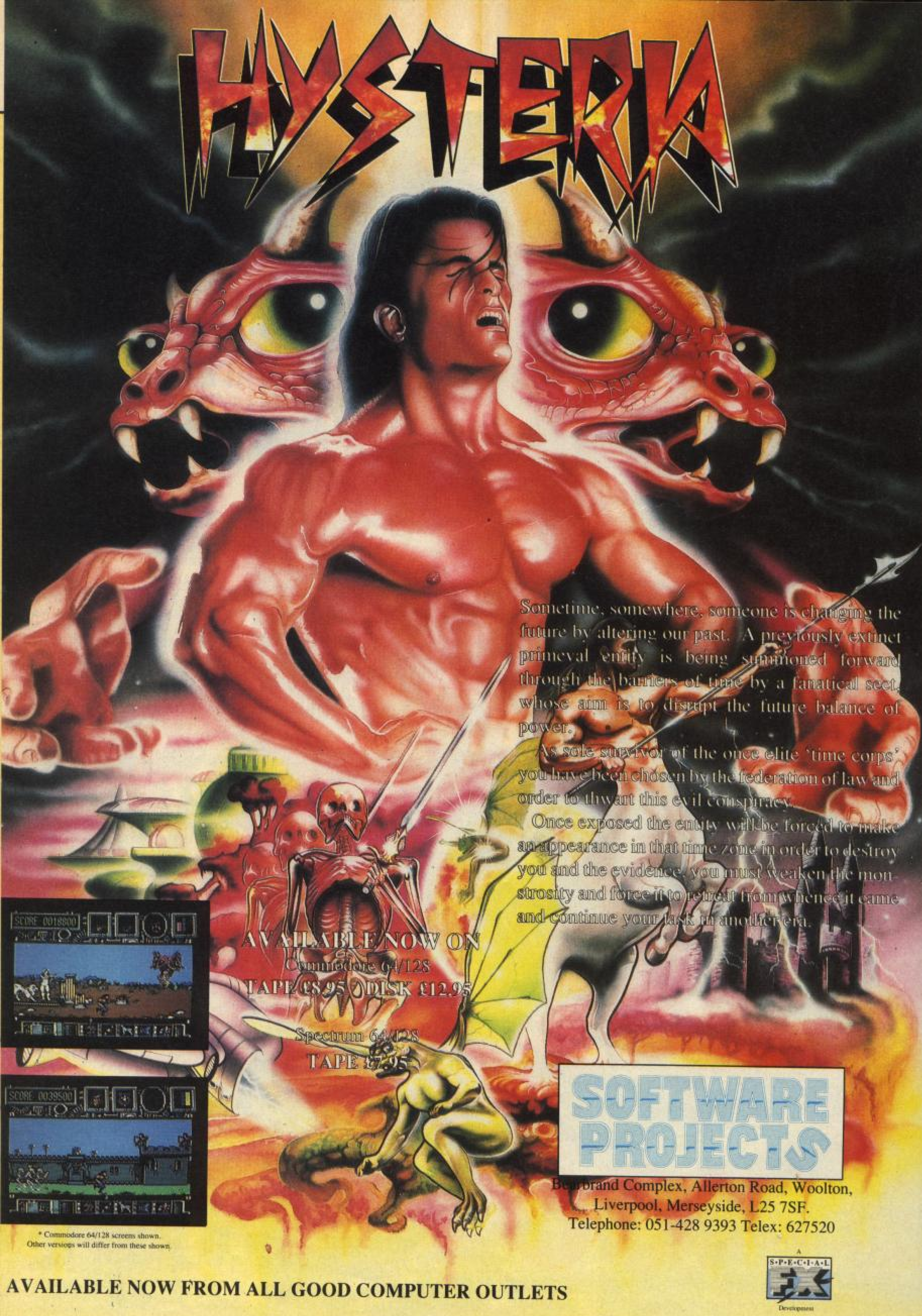
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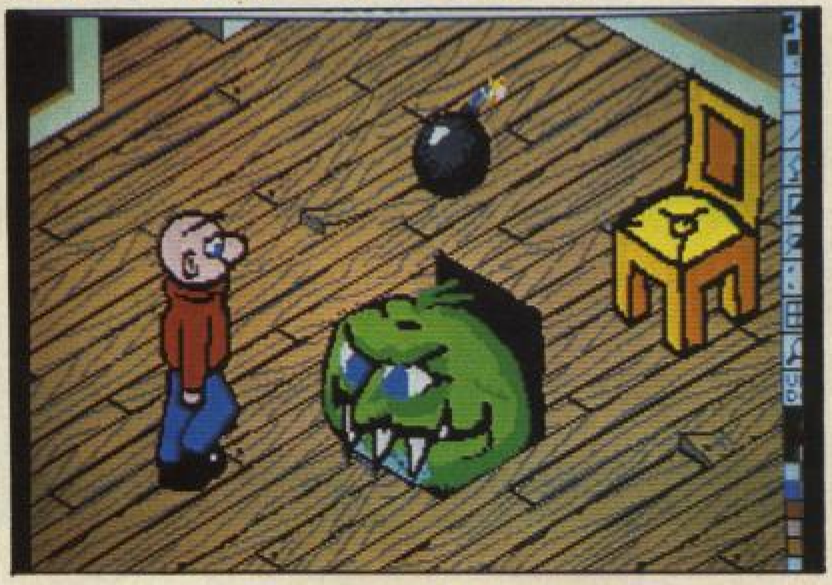
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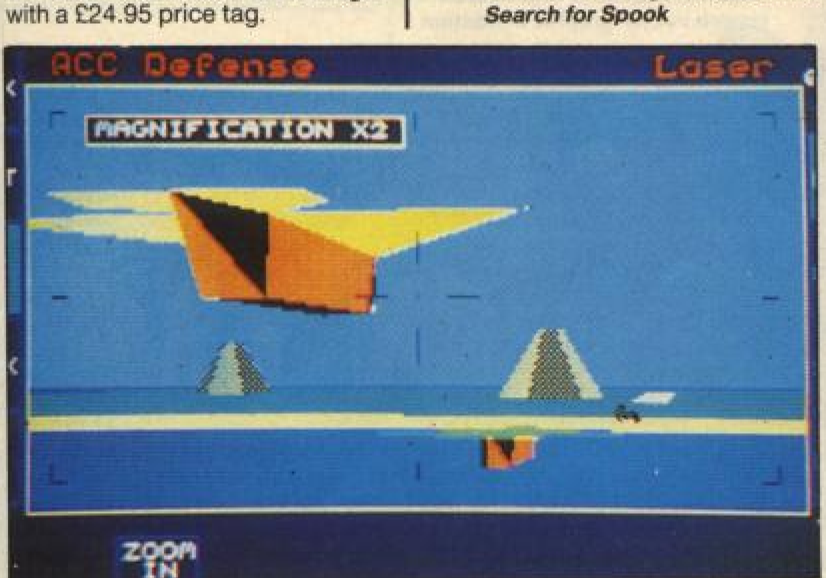
Realtime Software, programmers of Spectrum *Starstrike* and *Starglider*, are currently working on *Carrier Command*, a combat simulator for both the Atari ST and Amiga.

The player takes control of a futuristic aircraft carrier, equipped with four aircraft and four tanks, and conquers an archipelago of some 64 islands. The computer controlled enemy has the same weapons and equipment, so a fair degree of cunning, dextral ability and strategy have to be applied if the mission is to succeed.

The game features filled-in 3D graphics which run smoothly at an awesome speed, and look incredible. *Carrier Command* should be available towards the end of the month on both the ST and Amiga with a £24.95 price tag.



► **Dick Special has to negotiate all manner of strange hazards in his *Search for Spook***



► **Realtime's *Carrier Command* boasts some extremely fast, filled-in 3D action**

After seven years of programming, American designer D Ezra Sidrah is putting the final touches to his epic *Universal Military Simulator*, which is potentially the greatest breakthrough in computer wargaming to date.

The *UMS* is a wargame construction kit, allowing the player to pit an army of his own making against the massed forces of any other (ranging from a gang of spear-wielding savages to the most modern of NATO forces).

The battleground is displayed as a 3D grid landscape and contains many topographical features which are easily redesigned to represent any area of the world. There are also options to add cities, forests, deserts and rivers to add an extra touch of realism. The potential for creating battles is incredible, with almost infinite possibilities. Now you can pit a German Panzer Division against the entire Roman Army – on a Milton Keynes battlefield!

Armies are represented by icons and labels, and the proceedings are conducted using a comprehensive series of pull-down menus. The depth of play is phenomenal, with facts and figures for every aspect of play.

UMS is available now for the Atari ST for £24.95, with an identical version for the Amiga following in December.

► **Magnetic Scrolls' latest game, *Jinxter*, features static graphics of their usual high standard**



Jinxter is Magnetic Scrolls' follow up to *The Pawn* and *The Guild of Thieves*. Set in modern day Aquitania (on the borders of Kerovnia), the story revolves around the player's quest to find seven links of a fragmented magical charm bracelet which previously protected the land from bad luck. Carrying the country's remaining good luck, the player sets out to recover the seven charms.

As with its predecessors, *Jinxter* contains many puzzles, served with a large dose of humour. The accompanying graphics are of a similarly high standard to Magnetic Scrolls' previous games, and the parser has again been improved. Adventurers will be pleased to hear that the program is currently available for both the ST and Amiga for £24.95.

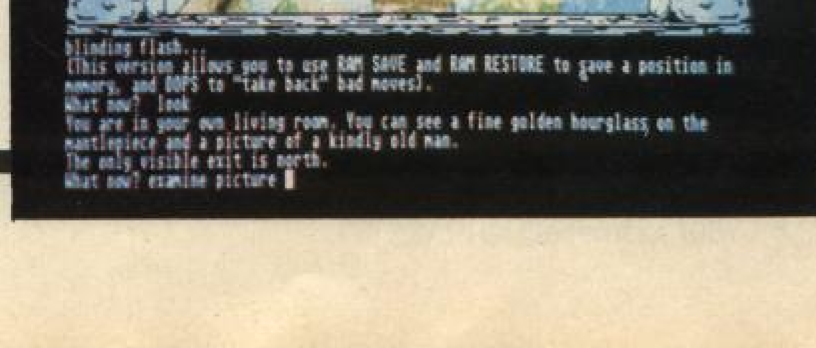
The Solid Software team of Sandy White and Angela Sutherland (the duo responsible for *Ant Attack* and *Zombie Zombie*) are putting the finishing touches to *Dick Special: The Search For Spook* after two years of programming.

The game features detailed, cartoon style backdrops and a fully animated character who carries out a large amount of movements smoothly and convincingly. As the title infers, the action follows Dick's attempts to find and rescue his dog Spook, who has been dognapped on the eve of the Mr Doggiverse show. Dick explores the hotel and its rooms, avoiding all manner of hazards and inconveniences along the way.

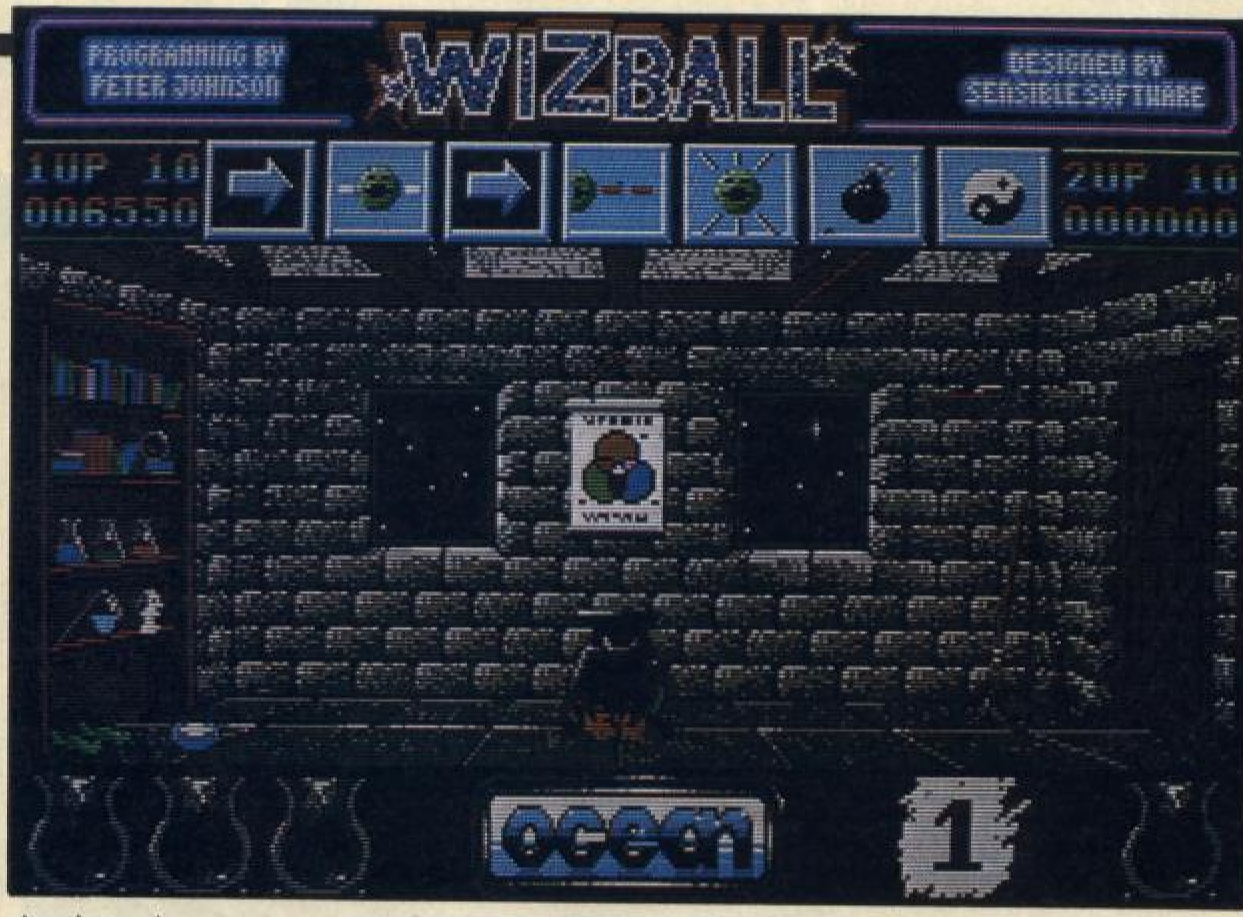
Dick Special is to be released first on the Amiga for £24.95, with an ST version to follow soon after.

The fourth Level 9 release on the Rainbird label is *Time and Magik*, another compilation of their earlier 8-Bit games, *Lord's of Time, Red Moon* and *Prince of Magik*. Each adventure is accompanied by improved digitised graphics (in a similar impressionist style to those used in *Knight Orc*), and an improved parser. The package offers great value for money and is available for both machines at £19.95.

► **The illustrations for Level 9's *Time and Magik* are actually digitised from original artwork**



►



OCEAN

Sensible Software's superb shoot and collect 'em up is soon to be available for the Atari ST and Amiga, courtesy of Pete Johnson, programmer of ST *Arkanoid*.

The gameplay is identical to the Commodore 64 version, but the graphics are improved, with finer sprite and backdrop definition, and some lovely effects: the landscape scrolls in smooth parallax and the 'feature' icons flip over when activated. An Amiga *Wizball* is also in the pipeline, but won't be finished before the New Year.

The other Ocean release is currently being programmed by Denton Design's Stoo Fotheringham. *Eco* is an innovative icon-driven game which follows the player's evolution from an insect through a possible 40,000,000,000 combinations of possible species, to a higher life form.

Each creature is animated using wire-frame graphics – initial demos of which are quite superb. Exterior factors also come into play, such as radioactive meteor showers (which mess up your DNA strands causing mutations) and the usual predatory considerations.

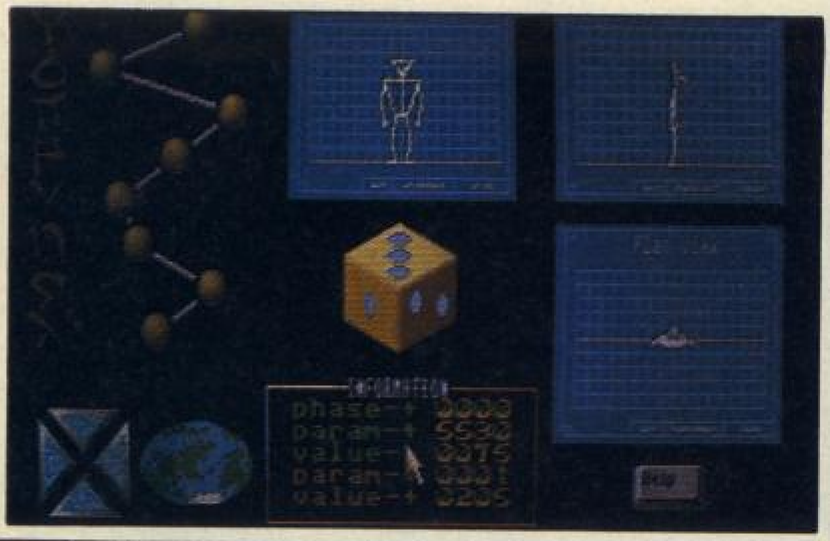
Eco should be finished in six to seven weeks with, an Amiga version planned for Christmas.

► Sensible Software's superlative 64 game has been brilliantly converted to the ST, and makes full use of the improved colour and graphics

► The Atari ST version of *Wizball* boasts some stunning graphics



► Ocean's innovative and unusual evolutionary game, *Eco* features some superb vector-graphic animation



ELECTRIC DREAMS

The popular Atari coin-op, *Super Sprint*, is the first arcade conversion from Electric Dreams. The objective is to race around a series of enclosed circuits to the finish line, avoiding hazards and the other cars – be they human or computer controlled.

As can be seen from the screen shot, the game is more or less identical to the stand-up version, and incorporates all the features of the original, including the three player option. Atari ST owners should be able to buy the finished game by the end of the month for £19.99.

► The ST version of *Super Sprint* has a three player mode, as signified by the superb options screen





◄ Budding boy racers are well catered for with the ST version of *Supersprint*

FIREBIRD

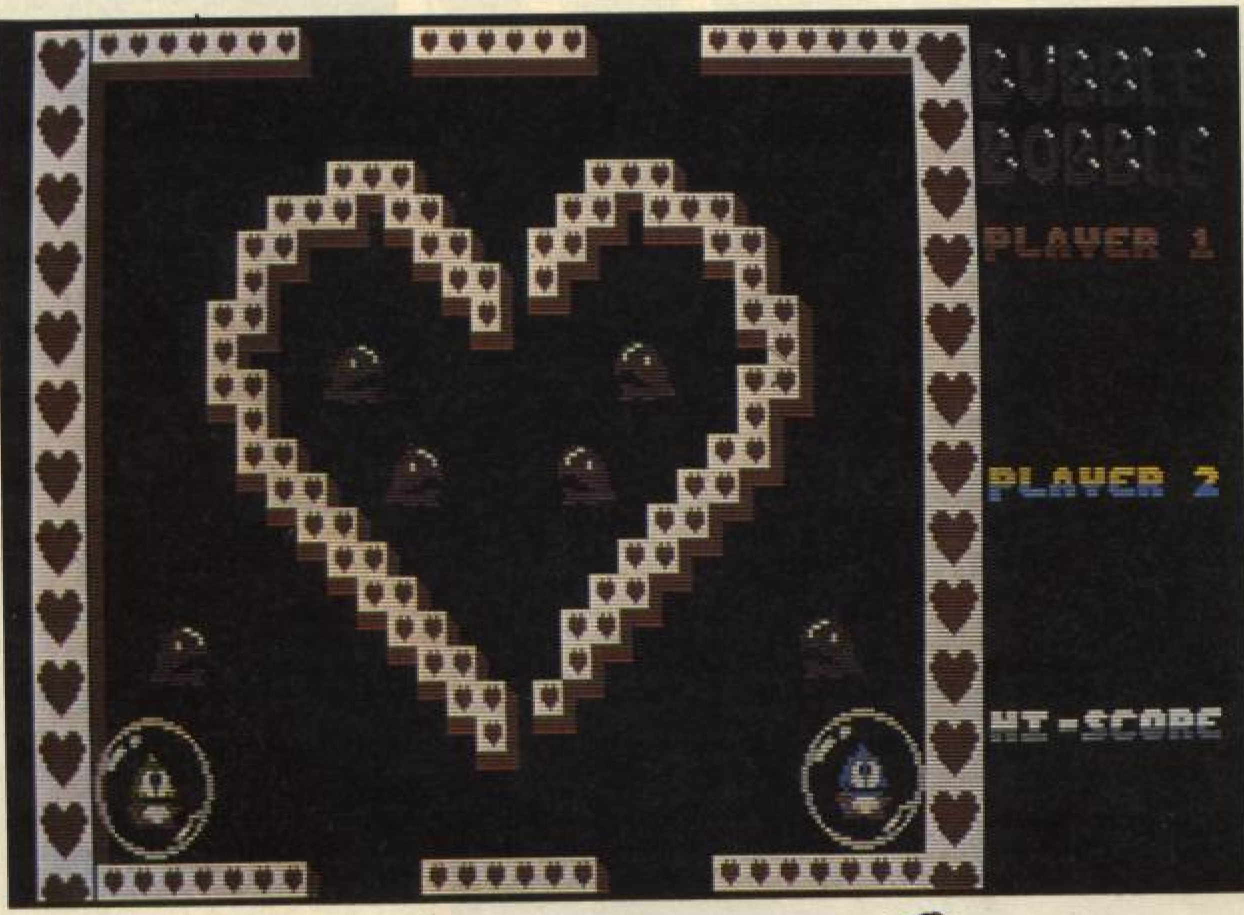
Bub and Bob the bubble-spitting brontosaurs are back again in what promises to be the best computer version of the arcade hit *Bubble Bobble*.

For all those unfamiliar with the game, it features the adventures of two brontosaurs as they travel through 100 hazard-filled screens to confront the evil Skull Monsta.

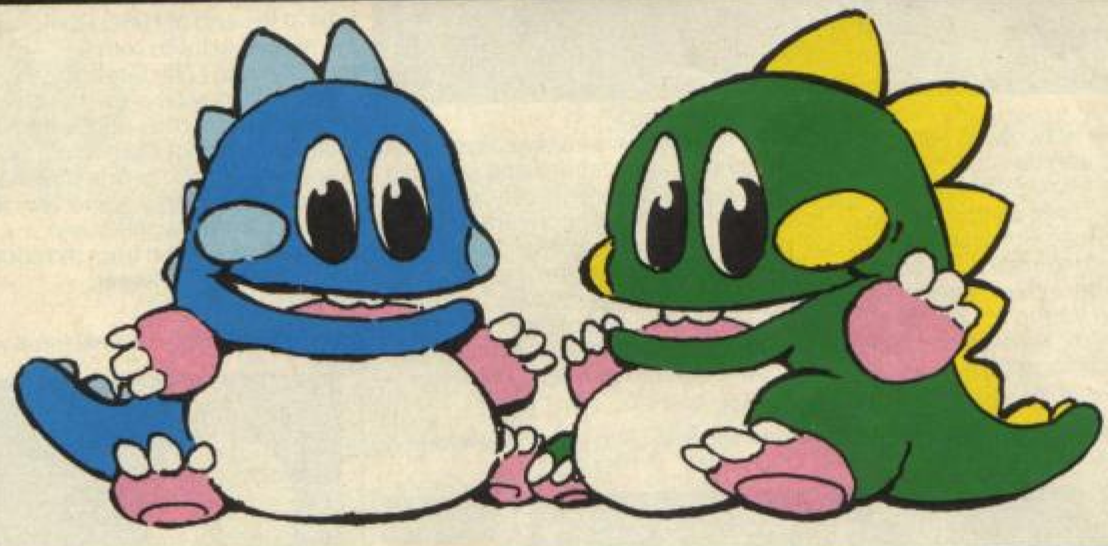
The gameplay is incredibly addictive, and it looks almost identical to the arcade original. Unfortunately there are no plans for an Amiga version, but ST owners will be able to buy *Bubble Bobble* from December.

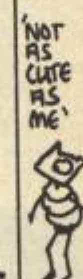
Firebird have also been busy converting some of their more successful Silver Range games to the Atari ST. *Thrust, Warhawk* and *I,Ball* are just about finished and will be available on the new 16-Bit 'budget' label at around £10.

The ST version of the almost legendary *Star Trek* is also ready for an 'imminent' release around Christmas. This Christmas coming, hopefully.











US GOLD

Not being a company to rest on their laurels, US Gold are all set to follow the incredible success of *Gauntlet* with the officially licensed sequel, *Gauntlet II.*

Set across most formats, *Gauntlet II* should prove a best seller when it appears on both the ST and Amiga. Plans are also afoot to make the 16-Bit conversions four player games, using a special link to connect two extra joysticks via the expansion port at the back of each machine.

Epyx also have a couple of games up their sleeve, most notably *Impossible Mission II*, the long awaited follow-up to the outstanding *Impossible Mission. IM II* is due out for the ST and Amiga very soon and follows a similar style of gameplay to the first. We wait with baited breath . . .

As with the the earlier Epyx sports simulations, *California Games* is also set to be converted to the Amiga and ST. More details when we have them.

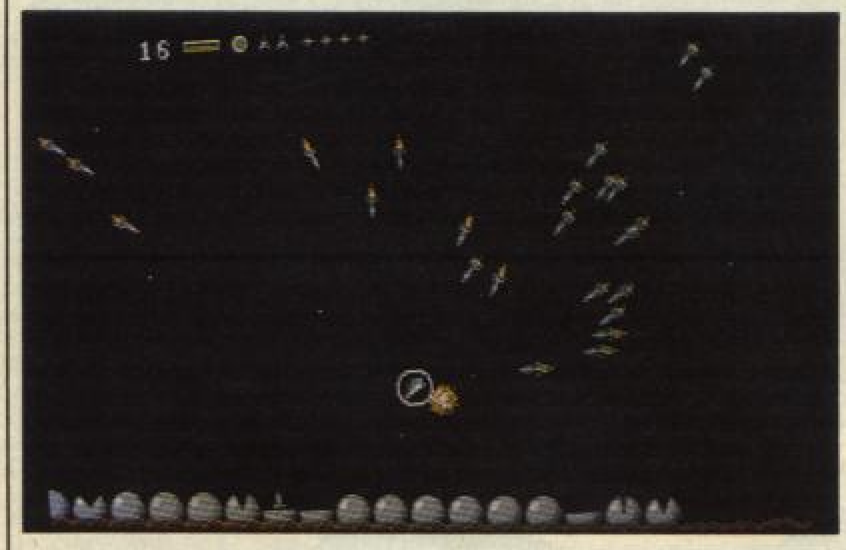
MIRRORSOFT

Available soon for the ST is FTL's *Oids*, a complex *Gravitar* variant with enough laser action to satisfy even the most avid of blasting freaks. There are six increasingly difficult missions to tackle, each requiring the player to fly down to the surface of a series of alien infested planets to rescue captured soldiers.

The second ST game from FTL is *Dungeon Master*, an RPG style game set in a labyrinthine dungeon. The action is presented in first person 3D as a band of four characters are directed through the catacombs. The game caters for combat between the characters and any of the dungeon's indigenous species as the player seeks out hidden treasures.

The ST version is at a fairly early stage, but still managed to raise an eyebrow or two with some very smart graphics.

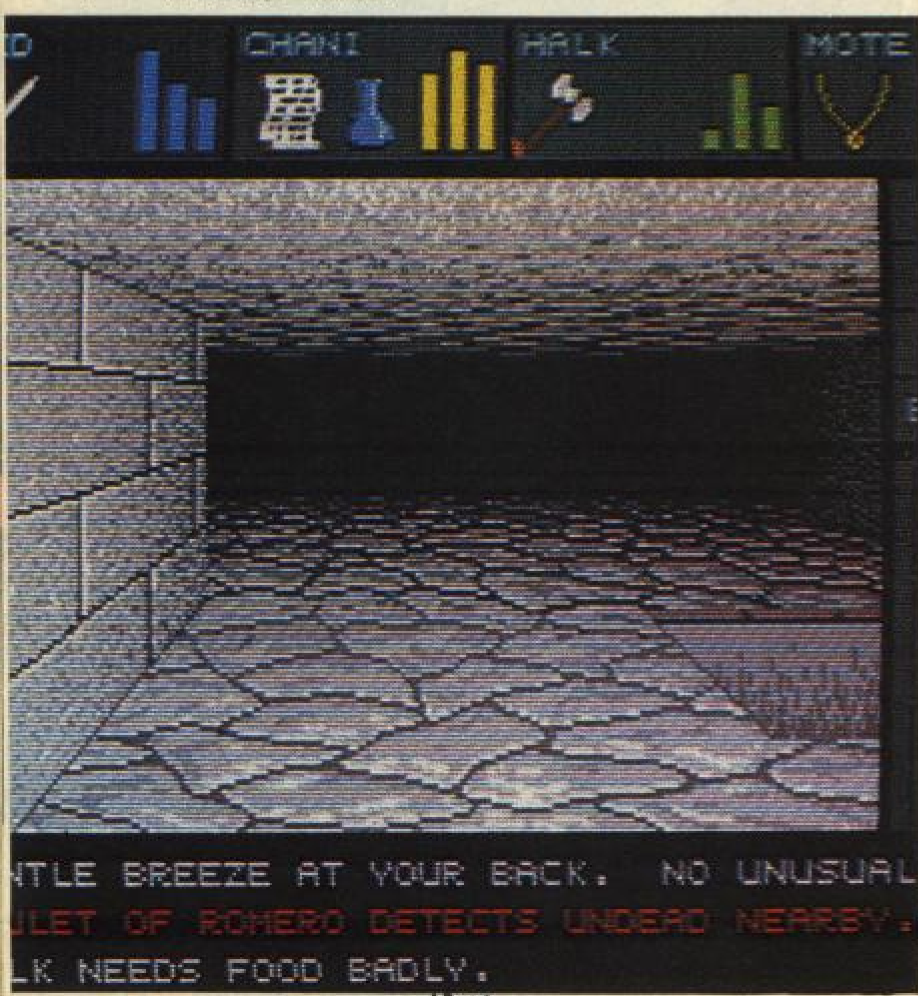
► **The later levels of *Oids* tend to get a bit tricky: witness the 23 homing missiles!**



Other Mirrorsoft's programs include *Tetris*, a logic puzzle game, *Mean Streak* and *Bermuda Project*, for both the ST and Amiga, *Strike Force Harrier* and *King of Chicago* for the Amiga, and *Spitfire 40*, *Dejá Vu* and the already classic Cinemaware release, *Defender of the Crown* for the ST.

The missions involve blasting all the alien installations and avoiding some pretty hefty defences, including gravity converters and droves of homing missiles. If a prison unit is hit, the captives escape and are rescued by landing the ship and allowing the men to board. Graphically, *Oids* is a real treat and the gameplay is absolutely superb.

► **Stunning graphics add plenty of atmosphere to Mirrorsoft's adventure/RPG, *Dungeon Master***





► **Amongst Electronic Arts' 16-bit forthcoming catalogue is the great role playing game *Bard's Tale*, which includes plenty of high-quality graphics to supplement the eerie action**

ELECTRONIC ARTS

The ST conversion of the classic arcade game, *Marble Madness* has just been released by Electronic Arts, although initial impressions are disappointing – it isn't as playable as the Commodore version. Still, you can decide for yourself if you've got £19.95 to spare.

Also available on the Electronic Arts label are *Bard's Tale*, an RPG which boasts some lovely graphics, *Degas Elite*, arguably the best art utility available for the ST and *Deluxe Paint II*, arguably the best art utility for the Amiga.

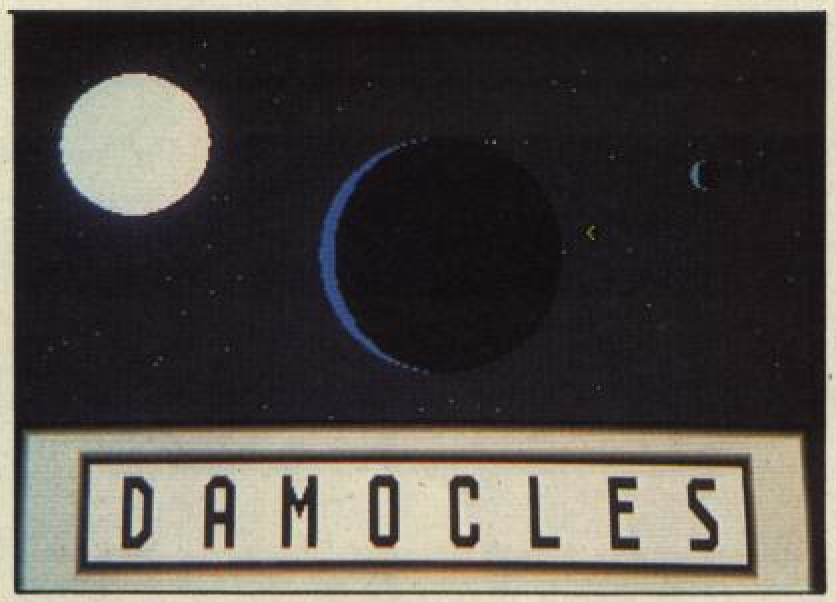
NOVAGEN

Paul Woakes' *Mercenary* caused quite a stir when it first appeared on the Atari XL and Commodore 64 at the end of 1985. Rumours of a sequel were to remain unfounded (*The Second City* being merely an add-on) until a couple of months ago, when the first pictures of *Damocles* appeared. Still far from finished, *Damocles* boasts some very fast and impressive planetary graphics, as seen from the cockpit of the player's vessel.

The completed game should contain the same captivating game style as *Mercenary*, but this time the action is set over several planets instead of just one. Interplanetary travel will therefore play a major role, as well as the normal exploratory and trading features. The game also allows the player to load in his escape status from *Mercenary* and begin the mission with the equipment which he took from Targ.

The ST version of *Damocles* is appearing first, with other formats to follow in early 1988.

► **Space isn't the final frontier in *Damocles***

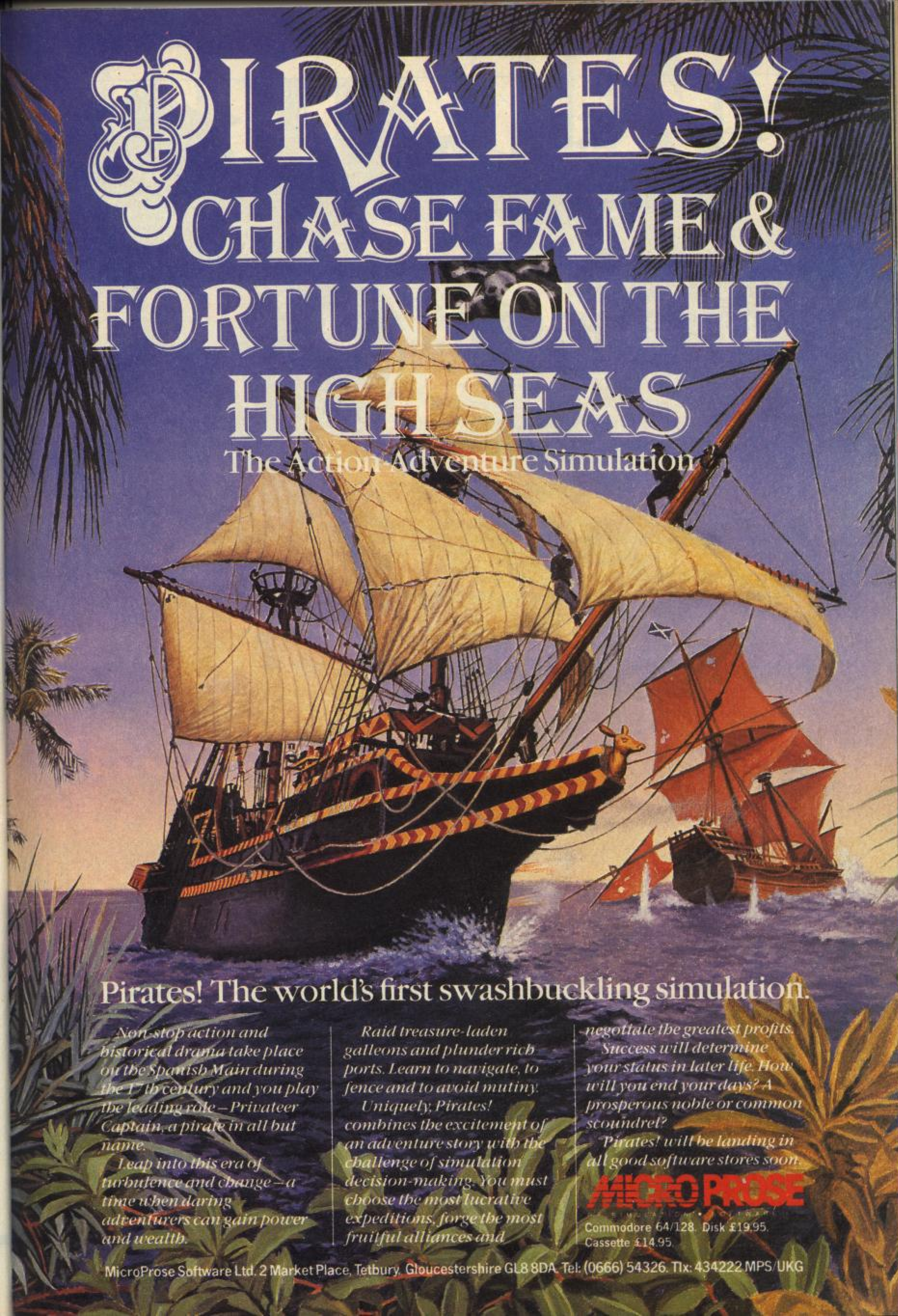


ELITE

The 8-Bit versions of *Battleships* have been recently dropped, the general feeling was that they weren't strong enough products to warrant a £10 price tag. However, Elite have decided to go ahead and release ST and Amiga versions.

The rules are exactly the same as the game played on paper, but benefits from animated action screens. *Battleships* is scheduled for a mid November release, at £19.95.

The other Elite release is a conversion of the popular off-road race game, *Buggy Boy*. The player takes control of a beach buggy and drives over rough terrain, collecting flags and avoiding obstacles such as fences, rocks and logs. From the early demos we've seen, *Buggy Boy* looks and plays as well as the original. The ST version is out around December, with an Amiga version following shortly after.


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SILVER SCREEN DREAM

Although Cinemaware are relative newcomers to the software scene, they've already made a big name for themselves. Their three 16-bit games, *Sinbad And The Throne Of The Falcon*, *Defender Of The Crown* and *SDI* have been widely acclaimed, and the Commodore 64 version of *Defender Of The Crown* has sold a record breaking 10,000 disks! How are they going to follow their successes? Julian Rignall spoke to the enthusiastic President of the Cinemaware Corporation, Bob Jacob, about future presentations.

Cinemaware first launched themselves into the software world with the Amiga version of *Defender Of The Crown*. The stunning graphics and sampled sound impressed many, and even though the game was a little easy to complete, it instantly became a yardstick for future Amiga software. Shortly after came *Sinbad And The Throne Of The Falcon*, which although not quite so visually impressive, had more depth in the gameplay. So, what now?

'We've nearly finished our next game,' reveals Bob, 'it's a gangster game called *King Of Chicago*. The end product will have 20 digitised sound effects and 30 different tunes.'

well, it'll blow you away – it's being written by the composer of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra!'

Also planned for a Spring release is *The Three Stooges*, an officially licensed game based on the old American comedy film characters. 'It's being written by the same guy who wrote the navigation program for the Space Shuttle,' Bob says. 'The sound is going to be very impressive, with over 900K of compressed digitised sound effects – more than any other computer game. The graphics are a mixture of digitised film as well as computer animation. We feel that this is the first computer program which really takes



▶ ***Defender of the Crown* – the largest selling 64 disk-based game to date**

As a gangster game, would *King Of Chicago* be violent? 'We are programming for an older audience, so there'll be a lot of romance and a little explicit language, but it's all mild stuff really. The trouble is that people go totally overboard when anyone mentions sex or violence. If you look around, everything has a sexual element – just look at adverts for example. It shows how immature attitudes are towards computer games – you put in a little sex and people go crazy!'

The demo of *King Of Chicago* that Bob bought along certainly looks very impressive – but the early demos of two releases scheduled for spring next year look even better! The first is *Rocket Ranger*, 'a Forties cliffhanger serial featuring Nazi spies, trips to the moon and an unflappable hero'.

Bob expands: 'The game is split into chapters, each one ending on a cliffhanger. There are plenty of arcade sequences, and the music . . .

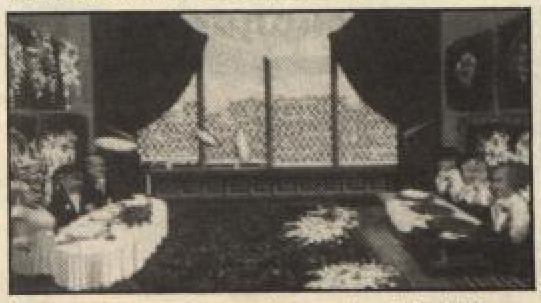
full advantage of its licence.'

In that case, does he feel that generally licences tend to fall short of their potential?

'Yes. Look at *Laurel And Hardy* – it's terrible, it has nothing to do with the characters.' And then continuing on the licence theme: 'The thing is, in Britain people think that they can only succeed if there are 30 sprites on screen. It's the content that counts. In the end it all comes down to a matter of time. In the UK it's not economically possible to spend time on anything. Over in America we spend at least a year on a project. We have two artists working for six months, a computer graphics man, a programmer and one person working on sound. We spend a lot of money on talented people . . . '

With all those people working away, do they find that they are at all limited by the machines they work with?

'The limitation is with disk space,' Bob admits. 'At the moment we're exploring the potential of interactive CD, and with 600 Mb of storage there's plenty of room! We're just trying to expand our themes. We're trying to appeal to people who love interactive experience. There are two types of person, one sort who just sits there and likes to be entertained, and the other



▶ ***The Three Stooges* in a custard pie fight**

type who loves to join in – that's the type of person we try and attract. We make our games easy to get into, so that the casual gamer can enjoy them.'

With plans for interactive CD, will Cinemaware move away from the humble



▶ **Digitised animation from *Stooges***

Commodore 64? 'No,' comes the firm answer. '*SDI* is currently being converted to the 64, and that looks really special. If you thought the graphics on *Defender Of The Crown* were good, wait until you see the ones on *SDI* – they make *Defender*'s look like a Spectrum game! We've taken the original Atari ST version and completely redesigned it, adding six extra arcade sequences. The gameplay has also been tweaked. After that comes *Sinbad* . . . '



▶ ***Rocket Ranger* takes to the air**

There are also plans for Commodore 64 versions of *Rocket Ranger* and *The Three Stooges* and, for the summer of 1988, *Bushido*, a Japanese type of *Defender Of The Crown* which sounds very promising indeed. It certainly looks like the interactive film genre has a very, very bright future ahead . . .

OUT NOW!!

ZZAP! takes a look at the latest and greatest 16-Bit releases

BARBARIAN

Palace Software, £14.99

That controversial slice 'em up game is back again – this time on the Atari ST and Amiga. *Barbarian* has two options: a head-to-head combat practice and mission, where the player battles ten fighters and a Wizard to rescue a maiden.

Palace sound supremo, Richard Joseph has used sampled sound effects to create a stunning atmosphere. Swishing and clanking swords, grunts, screams of pain and even gasps of effort play a perfect part in the action. Listening to a fight is incredible – it sounds just like a Conan film!

It's a shame there isn't a solo practice option, as rescuing the Princess stops the action just as things are hotting up! Mind you, the action is still thoroughly enjoyable, with some adrenalin-pumping fight sequences.

Barbarian is definitely the sort of game that gets loaded time and time again. It plays beautifully and has a fabulous 'feel' – you can really identify with the fighters. At a relatively cheap £15, *Barbarian* offers plenty of gory entertainment and shouldn't be missed.

OVERALL 89%



RANARAMA

Hewson, £19.95

This cross between *Paradroid* and *Gauntlet* has been given the 16-Bit treatment and made even better thanks to some lovely graphics and tweaked gameplay.

The player takes the role of an apprentice Wizard who's hopping mad – he's accidently turned himself into a frog. Rather than wait for an amphibian-kissing Princess to come along, he decides to enter a dungeon and steal the Runes of Power hidden there, a task which requires him to dispatch the 12 Warlocks who dwell within.. With the mission completed he returns to his happy human form . . .

The action is highly enjovable and requires both thought and quick reflexes to survive. Although it's rather pricey, there's plenty of depth and should keep *Gauntlet* fans happy for some time.

OVERALL 79%



► **Hewson's first 16-Bit venture is a slightly tweaked version of their popular *Gauntlet*-style arcade adventure, *Ranarama*.**

TERRORPODS

Psygnosis, £24.95

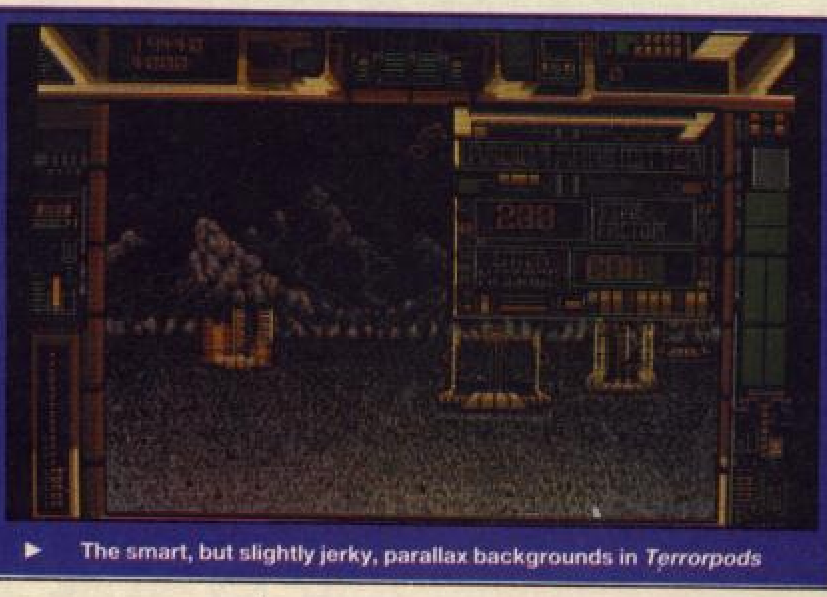
The asteroid 'Colian' holds a wealth of minerals and is mined by the Federation. All goes well until the evil Empire attacks and turns the place into a slave labour camp with the sole aim of producing the vital components of Terrorpods – the Empire's ultimate weapon.

Seeing this as a chance to learn the secrets of Terrorpod construction, the Federation plant an undercover agent in the complex, but the Empire find out their plans and decide to destroy the entire works and all its secrets.

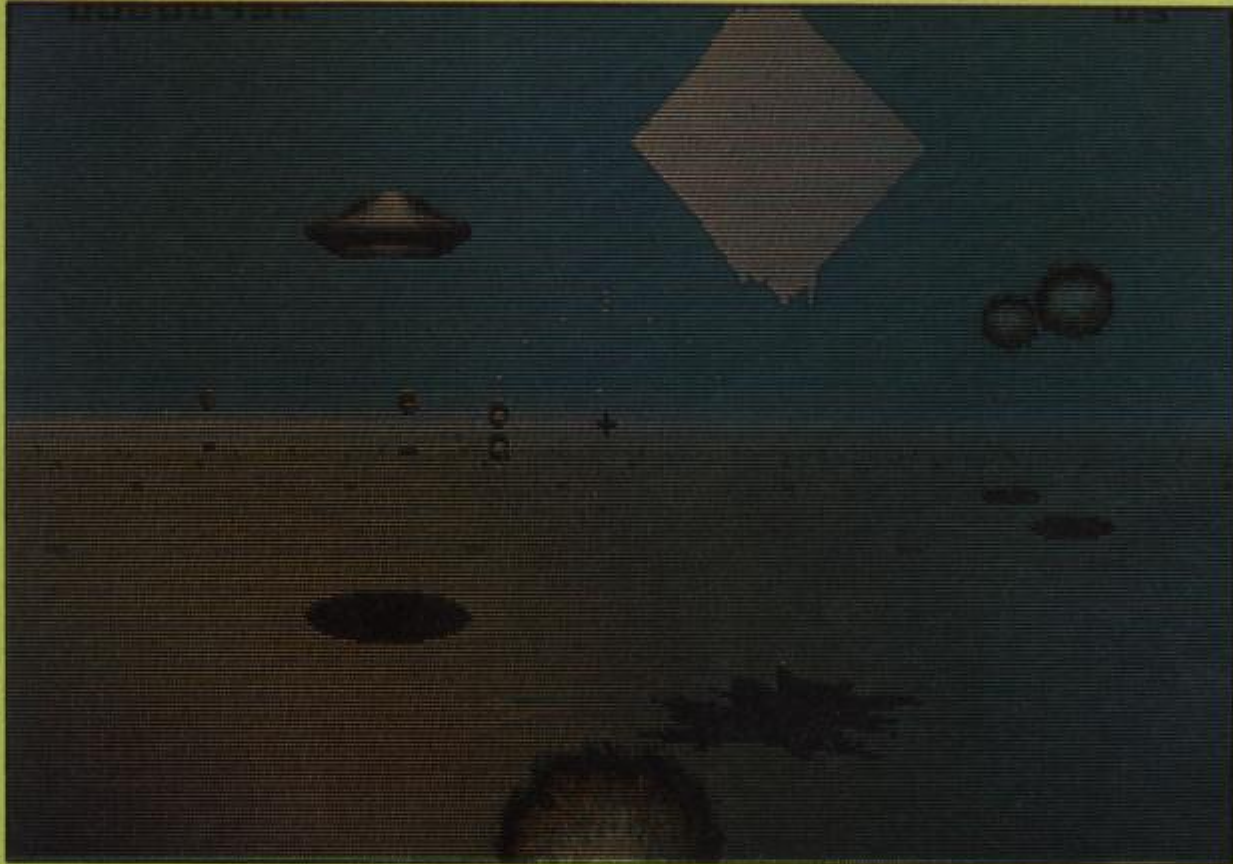
Taking the role of Federation agent, the player attempts to both defend and co-ordinate the running of all ten mining colonies, by trading the necessary minerals which each colony needs, and reconstructing units destroyed by the Empire.

Completing the game relies heavily on strategy as well as mindless blasting, the latter of which is accompanied with some great sampled effects. The graphics aren't bad and the game is engrossing, but the £25 price tag is a little on the steep side.

OVERALL 69%



► **The smart, but slightly jerky, parallax backgrounds in *Terrorpods***



BACKLASH

Novagen, £19.95

Paul *Mercenary* Woakes' *Encounter* was released three and a half years ago, and quickly gathered a cult following. Now a 16-Bit sequel has arrived in the form of *Backlash*.

The first-person 3D action takes place on an alien desert, where weird aggressors fly in to attack your craft. In some situations there are so many things to avoid, blast and watch out for, it's almost overwhelming. The 3D effect is staggering, with beautifully detailed objects whizzing in and out of the screen at an awesome rate. The gameplay is truly dextral, and you get completely wrapped up with the action. Atari ST owners can rush out and buy it now – Amiga fans will have to wait until after Christmas.

OVERALL 92%

▲ **Paul Woakes' 16-Bit version of *Encounter*. *Backlash* takes it a few steps further . . .**

CHESSMASTER 2000

Electronic Arts, £24.95

Chess programs have been with us since the very advent of computer gaming, and now they've taken a new twist with Electronic Arts' *Chessmaster 2000*.

All the 'standard' chess program features are there, including twelve levels of difficulty, with five further options to modify play within those levels, take back a move, force the computer to move, and set up play. There are also several unusual features, including speech (with a very friendly sampled voice used on the ST, and the standard built-in speech on the Amiga) and two modes of display; 2D 'newspaper' style or true 3D which, unlike other attempts, works extremely well. Other options allow the user to change the piece and board colours, load or save part finished games and display a phoney spreadsheet 'when the boss walks in'.

Chessmaster 2000 plays a very strong game, even on low levels, and the wealth of options and friendly speech make it highly enjoyable to play. If you're after an Amiga or ST chess game, this is definitely the one to buy.

OVERALL 86%



BARBARIAN

Psygnosis, £24.95

Not to be mixed up with Palace's namesake, this arcade adventure from Psygnosis puts the player into the role of Hegor the Barbarian.

After seeing his father brutally slain while battling a ferocious dragon, Hegor vows to destroy the monster. The story of Hegor is recounted in the 14-page booklet that accompanies the game, which carries on where the tale ends.

Hegor is icon controlled, and accessing each one with either the mouse or joystick allows the savage one to run, jump, pick up items, attack and defend, and if the battle isn't going to well, flee. Although appearing quite unwieldy, this system works surprisingly well.

The loinclothed hero moves across each static screen until he reaches either edge. The screen then rapidly scrolls across to show the next location, in a sort of pseudo flick-screen style.

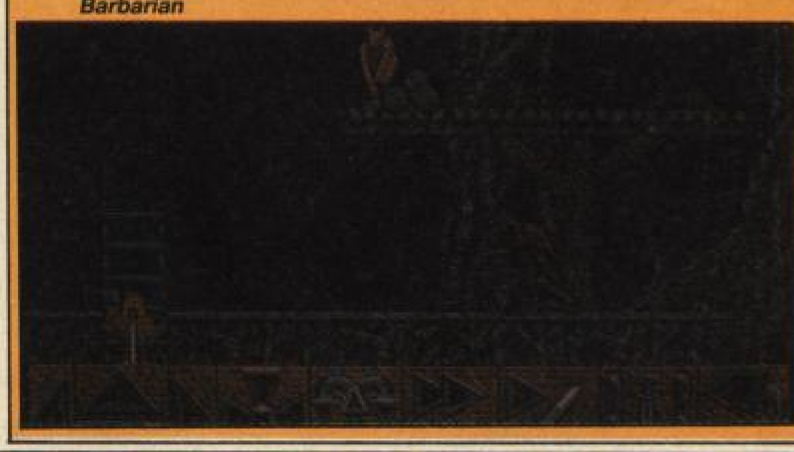
Graphically, the game is very smart, with good use of colour and a suitably earthy, primaeval feel to it. Hegor and the inhabitants of this strange world are neatly drawn, although the animation is lacking polish.

Each time Hegor attempts a strenuous motion, a digitised grunt issues forth, and attacking monsters also let rip with some effective, gutteral noises.

Barbarian has plenty of depth and should appeal to arcade adventurers who like a slice of action.

OVERALL 81%

► **The first 16-Bit icon-controlled, bash 'em up arcade adventure, *Barbarian***

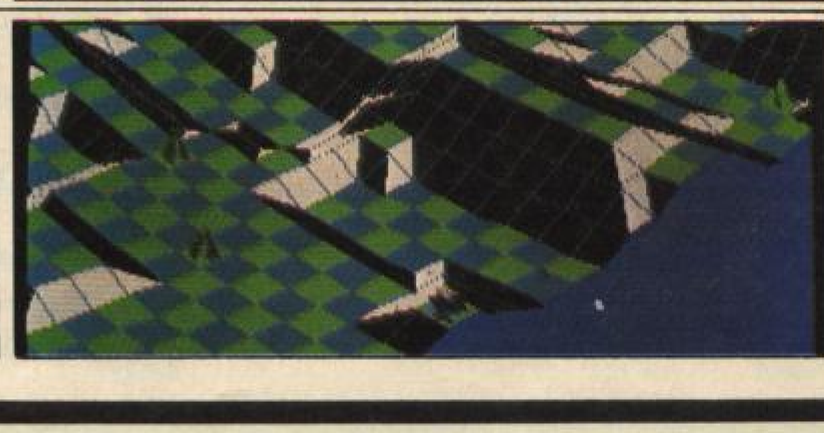


THE SENTINEL

Firebird, £19.95

Hailed by many as one of the most innovative pieces of software ever written, *The Sentinel* is now available in 16-Bit form. The gameplay is identical to the original 8-Bit versions, but the graphics are slightly clearer and run much, much faster. There's also a new 'help' feature which allows the landscape to be viewed from far above, so that the player can see exactly where he is.

When ZZAP! reviewed *The Sentinel* last year it was felt that it was in a class of its own and defied ratings. We say the same about the new versions . . .



ZZAP! READERS'



GAMES TOP 30

1 *(3)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(16%)*
System 3

2 *(4)* **WIZBALL** *(9%)*
Ocean

3 *(8)* **BARBARIAN** *(8%)*
Palace

4 *(-)* **BUBBLE BOBBLE** *(7%)*
Firebird

5 *(2)* **LEADERBOARD** *(5%)*
US Gold/Access

6 *(1)* **WORLD GAMES** *(5%)*
US Gold/Epyx

7 *(11)* **WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD** *(4%)*
US Gold/Access

8 *(5)* **GAUNTLET** *(3%)*
US Gold

9 *(16)* **CALIFORNIA GAMES** *(2%)*
US Gold/Epyx

10 *(7)* **ELITE** *(2%)*
Firebird

11 *(9)* **URIDIUM**
Hewson

12 *(17)* **KIKSTART II**
Mastertronic

13 *(10)* **THE SENTINEL**
Firebird

14 *(12)* **GUNSHIP**
Microprose

15 *(6)* **DELTA**
Thalamus

16 *(18)* **DEFENDER OF THE CROWN**
Mirrorsoft

17 *(13)* **SANXION**
Thalamus

18 *(15)* **HEAD OVER HEELS**
Ocean

19 *(-)* **ZYNAPS**
Hewson

20 *(19)* **MERCENARY**
Novagen

21 *(20)* **NEMESIS**
Konami

22 *(27)* **ROAD RUNNER**
US Gold

23 *(21)* **I,BALL**
Firebird

24 *(-)* **BOULDERDASH**
Prism

25 *(14)* **PAPERBOY**
Elite

26 *(22)* **INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST**
Pandora

27 *(26)* **STAR PAWS**
Software Projects

28 *(24)* **GREEN BERET**
Imagine

29 *(-)* **MEGA APOCALYPSE**
Martech

30 *(-)* **RENEGADE**
Ocean

S' CHARTS / DECEMBER 1987



MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(3)* **DELTA** *(36%)*
Thalamus
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

2 *(1)* **SANXION** *(12%)*
Thalamus
Loading Music – Rob Hubbard

3 *(4)* **THE LAST NINJA** *(9%)*
System 3
Title Tune – Ben Daglish

4 *(-)* **MEGA APOCALYPSE** *(7%)*
Martech
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

5 *(7)* **WIZBALL** *(6%)*
Ocean
Main Theme – Martin Galway

6 *(2)* **GREEN BERET** *(5%)*
Imagine
Loading Music – Martin Galway

7 *(5)* **I,BALL** *(4%)*
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

8 *(6)* **ARKANOID** *(2%)*
Imagine
Title Tune – Martin Galway

9 *(10)* **GAME OVER** *(2%)*
Imagine
Title Tune – Martin Galway

10 *(8)* **FLASH GORDON** *(2%)*
MAD
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

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COMPETITION

To celebrate the launch of Firebird's new up-market £2.99 budget label, Telecomsoft have decided to give away THE ENTIRE Firebird 199 Silver Range to the lucky winner.

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Listed below are five anagrams of famous Firebird one ninety-niners. All you have to do is unscramble the letters to reveal the correct title. Simple eh?

1) FANS OF NICE BRAVES

2) HANDY BHAGEE RIVER

3) AH, KIRLY PODS

4) NIKKY THE SNOG-WIG

5) TOWN WATER PILL

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ZZAP 64

"... The Excelerator+, though, seems to cope faultlessly with commercial software ..."
Popular Computing Weekly

"... the drive does have dramatic improvements over the 1541 in quality and reliability ..."
COMPUTE!'s Gazette

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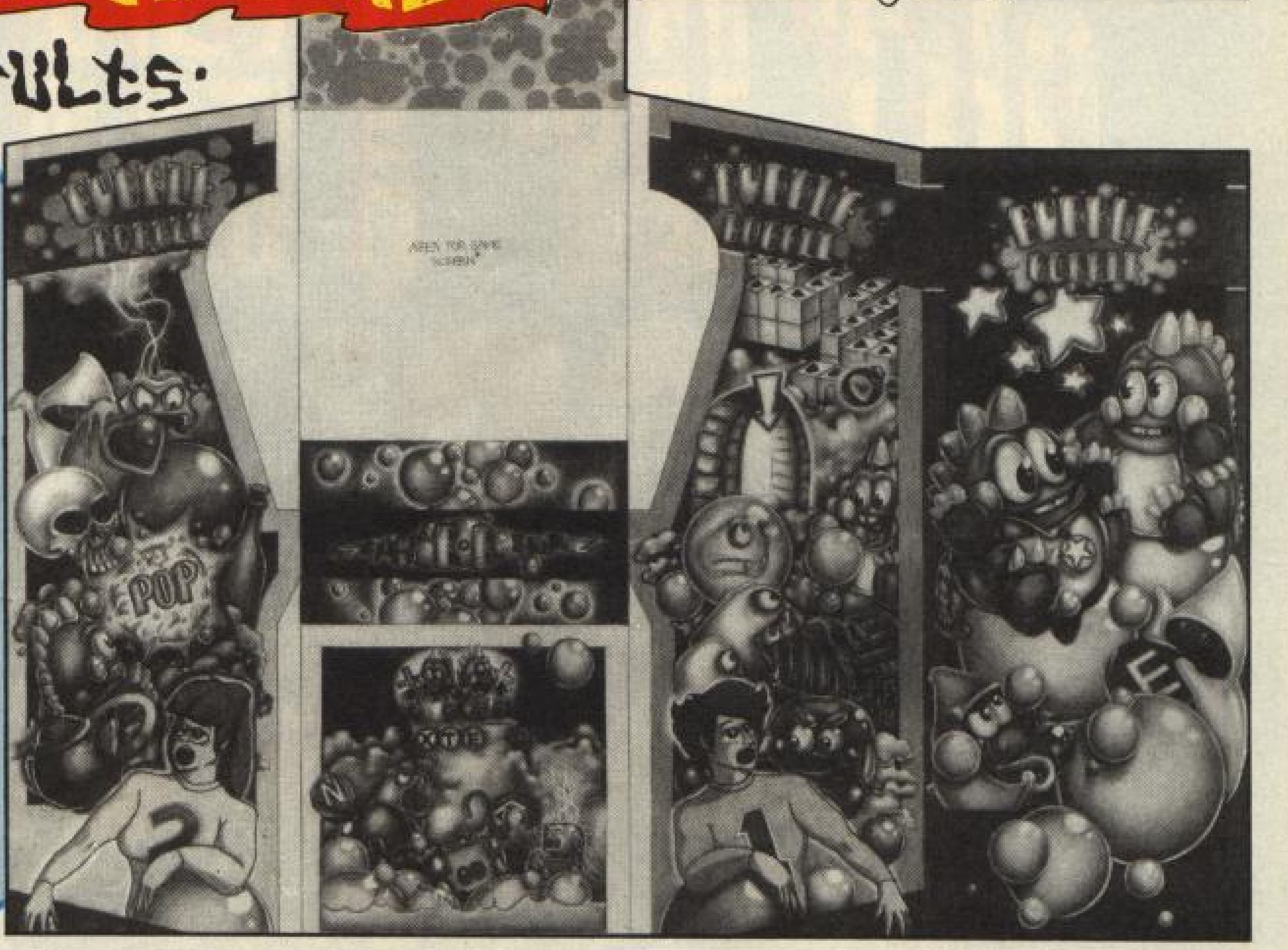
ZZAP! WINNERS! RESULTS

FOREVER BLOWING BUBBLES

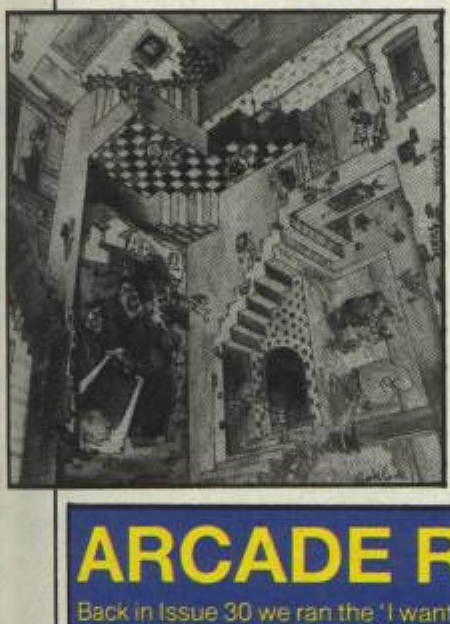
Firebird's fabulous *Bubble Bubble* arcade machine competition stirred up an incredible amount of interest as readers sent in their designs for the side of a Bubble Bobble arcade machine.

The competition was run across both ZZAP! and CRASH, and we're pleased to say that a ZZAP! reader – **Matt Lyon** of Hampshire, RG22 5RH – is the very lucky winner. Congratulations Matt! A fabulous *Bubble Bobble* arcade machine is all yours!

There are also 25 runners up prizes of a copy of the game – the lucky winners are . . .







THOSE WITH AN ARTISTIC BENT

Rainbird were so pleased with their *Advanced OCP Art Studio* that they offered an airbrush complete with hose, three cans of propellant, a set of ten airbrushing inks *and* a copy of *OCP Art Studio* to the reader who could draw the best picture of Rockford in his studio. Our favourite was sent in by **W A Chetwynd**, Warks, CV10 0DR. There are also ten runners-up prizes of copies of the *Art Studio*, which are claimed by . . .

Nial Quee, N. Ireland, BT19 1DD; Stephen A Graham, Cumbria, CA2 7QB; Aten Skinner, Orpington, Kent; Clive Bevan, Gwent, NP4 0EY; David Knox, Scotland, EH16 5HQ; Peter Skelton, Northern Ireland, BT21 0PQ; Danny Blom, Birmingham, B15 2NG; Hayden Duvall, Merseyside, WA11 9JY; Peter Cummings, Ripley, Derbys, DE5 8JF; John Haigh, South Yorks, S71 1XA.

STREAKY MEAN

In preparation for the release of their futuristic motorcycling game, *Mean Streak*, Mirrorsoft decided to offer an adventure day out with the ZZAP! team for five people. Those lucky (or unlucky, however you view it) are **Simon Taylor, Leics, LE7 7PX; Spencer Torr, Beds, MK44 3JP; Steven Francis, Essex, SS11 8NA; Jamie Dunning, Cornwall, PL15 8HN** and **Kevin Burton, Southampton, SO4 4FL.**.

Fifty runners-up each receive a specially made *Mean Streak* key fob. They are . . .

Philip Wynn, Lancashire, WN8 9BD; Ian Lowe, Surrey, KT9 2EY; Nicholas Lee, Cambs, PE17 3SR; S B Woods, Goole, DN14 9QD; Paul Dorritt, Elizabeth Barracks, BFPO 29; Mark Ratcliff, Kent, CT4 5DH; Graham Taylor, Oxon, OX8 7EW; N Reynolds, Surrey, KT9 1XQ; T Y Barlow, West Yorkshire, WF5 9RB; Richard Sykes, West Yorkshire, BD16 1LB; Stephen Keach, Warwicks, CV12 9PU; Paul Taplin, Derby, DE3 2HS; Mark Taylor, South Glamorgan, CF6 5AH; Scott Graten, Tyne and Wear, NG25 8RE; Lawrence Bowyer, Berkshire, RG7 3NN; Jason Baker, Kent, CT1 1TS; Michael Dutton, Birmingham, B33 8EQ; Sebastian James, Powys, LD6 2HL; Phil Yard, Surrey, CR2 0BN; Philip Ruxton, Essex, CO3 3SD; Daren Parr, Notts, NG16 6QW; Justin Mallinson, Nottingham, NG13 8SP; Gary Smith, Notts., NG9 1QA; Robert Dilks, Notts, NG9 4DL; David Horton, West Midlands, WV6 0TQ; Nichola Cobner, Gwent, NP44 5AF; Neil Stewart, Glasgow, G41 4DF; Robert Macintyre, Cheshire, SK8 3AT; Matthew Kibby, Bristol, BS19 2RG; A Marshall, Merseyside, L35 0PQ; James Witney, Lincs, LN13 9QS; Mr C D Lloyd, Hereford, HR4 7EN; Stephen Downey, Northern Ireland, BT14; Daniel Taylor, Leics, LE6 1LB; R Wallman, Surrey, RH7 6QF; Thomas R Macdonald, Lanarkshire, ML7 5AR; Russell Ayres, Bristol, BS6 5AN; Michael James Brown, West Yorkshire, WF5 0QD; Anthony Goddard, Oxford, OX2 7TE; Barry Bolton, Billingham, TS23 1DW; Alasdair MacLeod, Isle of Lewis, PA37 2HB; Jason Taylor, West Midlands, WV12 5AR; R Marshall, Merseyside, L35 0PQ; Andrew Sharp, South Yorkshire, DN5 8PJ; A J O'Donovan, Hampshire, SO2 4BQ; Zzap! Reader, Oxon, RG9 5AR; Shouma Khan, Lancs, BL5 2QP; Terje Hansen, Kongsberg, Norway; Barry Markay, Surrey, RH6 9RP; Simon Bell, Worcs, DY10 3YU.

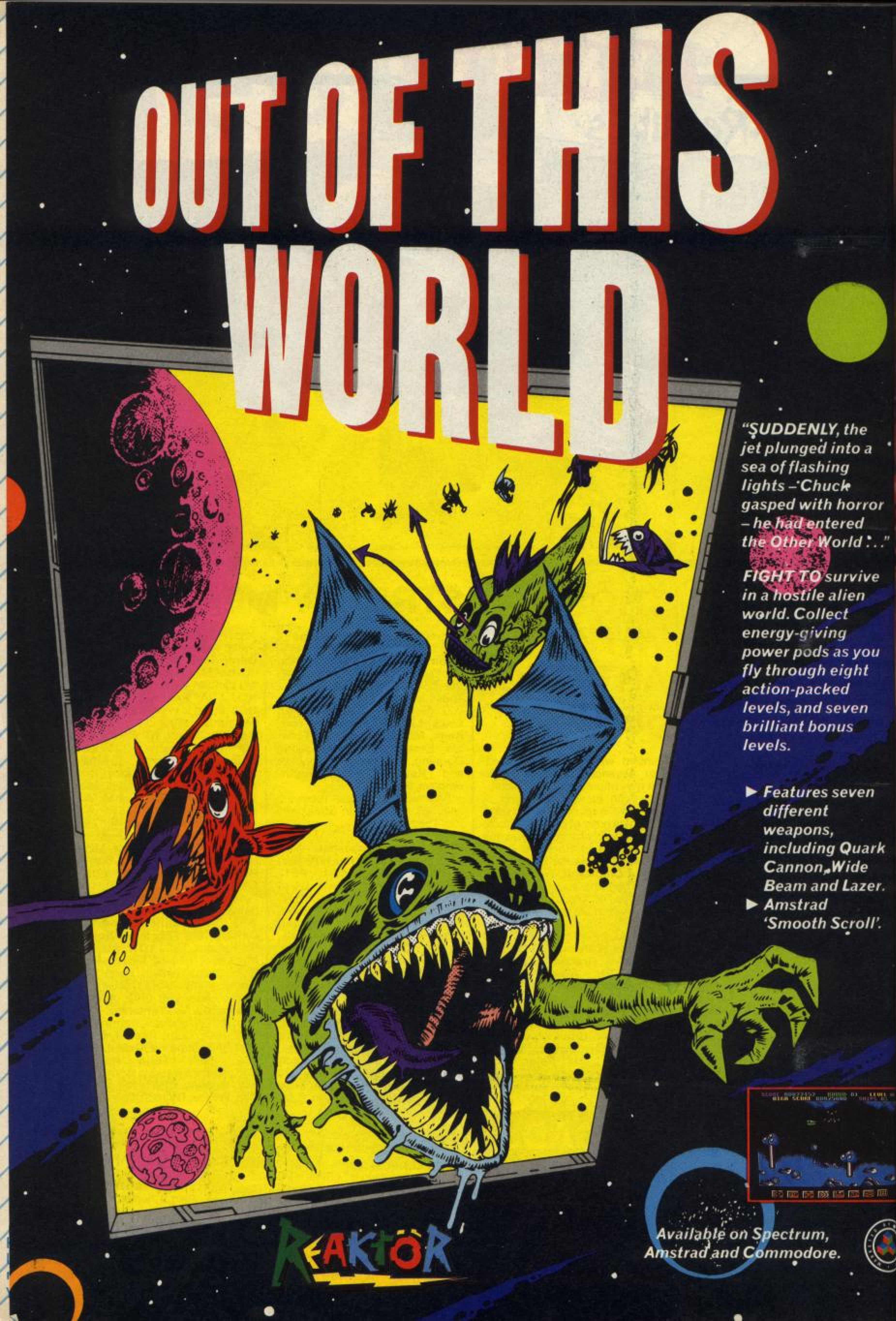
ARCADE RENEGADE

Back in Issue 30 we ran the 'I want to be a Renegade' comp. All you had to do to win an amazing Renegade briefcase arcade machine and monitor was to answer a few simple questions . . . and the first person out of the bag was **Jozef Pierlejewski** of Manchester, M31 2QZ. Congratulations Jozef, the machine is currently winging its way to your house!

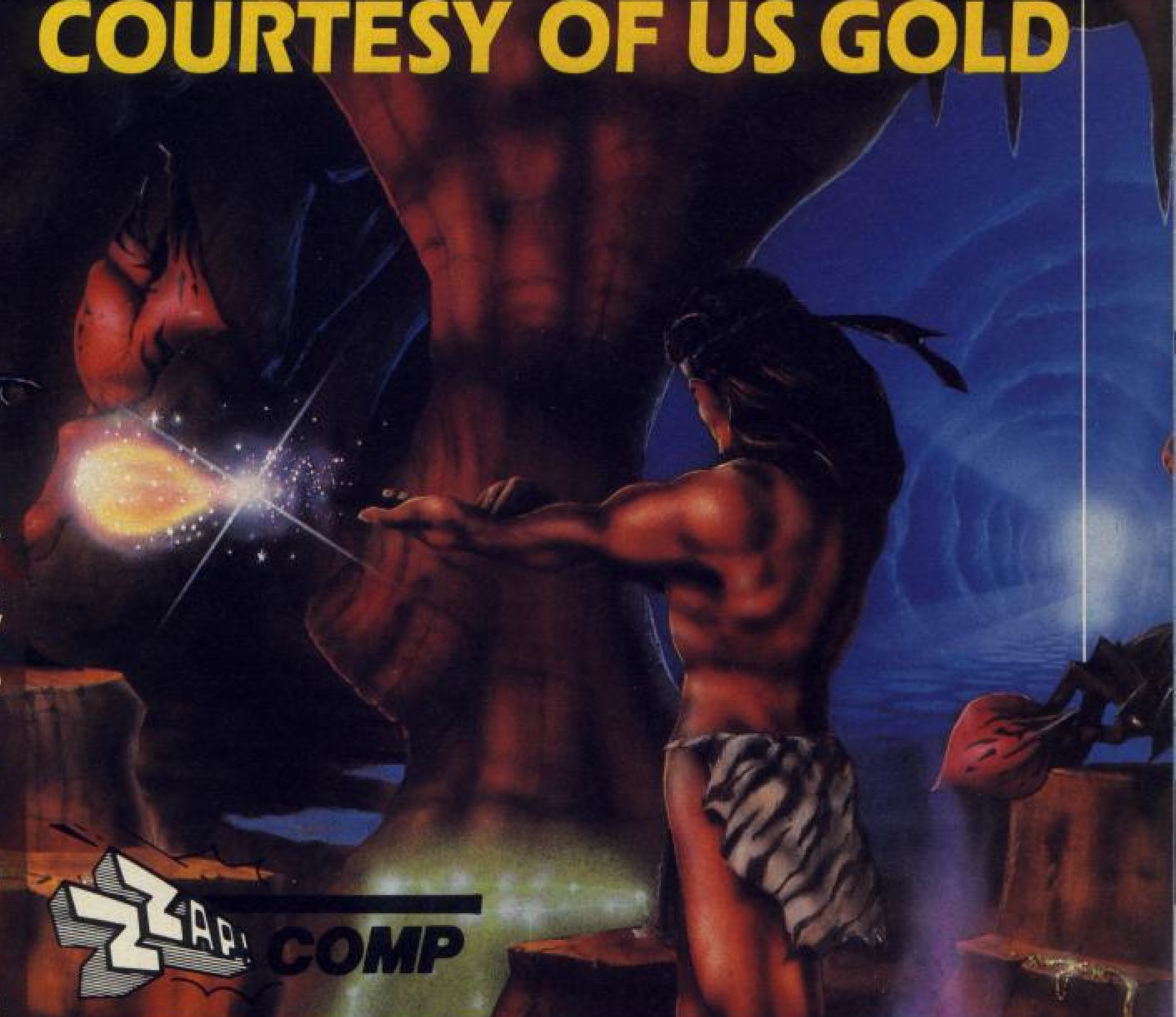
CHART VOTING DRAW WINNERS

WINNER (£40 worth of software plus ZZAP! T-Shirt): D M Edwards, Sutton Coldfield B74 3HS

RUNNERS UP (ZZAP! T-Shirt and Cap): Wari Orumbie, London SE15, N Prichard, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1AT, Murray Reid, Chester, CH4 7RJ, Mat Eastmond, Amersham, HP6 5LB


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ZZAP! COMP

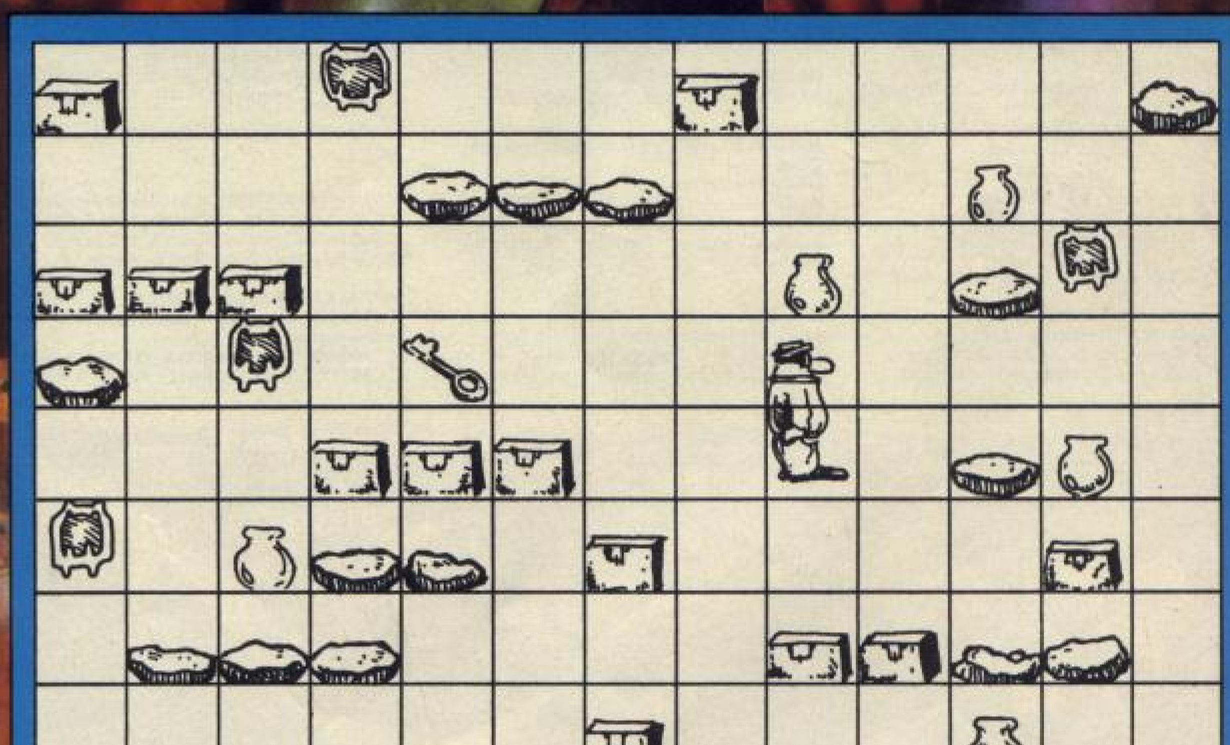
Missing out on Sizzlerdom by the merest fraction last issue, US Gold's *Solomon's Key* is a brilliantly addictive platform puzzle game. The friendly chaps from Birmingham have agreed to stump up THREE Gold Sovereigns (valued around the £300 mark) for the lucky chap or lady that manages to locate the hidden treasure on the map below. Have a look at the *Solomon's Key* room and, using your judgement and knowledge of footballing conditions, place a single '**X**' where you think the treasure is most likely to be hidden.

The entry which has its mark closest to that positioned by our panel of experts(?) will walk of with the goodies, plus a copy of the game. 25 runners-up will also win the 64 version of *Solomon's Key* for their troubles.

Place your entry (or a suitable copy) in an envelope and send it to: **SOLOMON'S SOVEREIGNS COMP, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**, to arrive no later than 10 December.

Don't forget to include some sort of name, address and phone number if possible.

Happy 'X'-ing.



THE SCORELORD'S HG

ALIENS (Electric Dreams)
420,850 Tony Jones, Aberchirder, Aberdeen
143,500 Paresh Solanki, Forest Gate, London
126,500 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales

ALLEYKAT (Hewson)
14,582,700 Jean-Claude Zeh, Hoenheim, France
9,334,400 Richard Hudson, Copmanthorpe, York
8,917,300 Tony Shoreman, Billington, Lancs

ANTIRIAD (Palace Software)
Completed In . . .
3:06 M Gooday, Bishop's Stortford, Herts
3:12 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
3:40 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs

ARKANOID (Imagine)
1,378,040 Falco, Cleethorpes, S Humberside
1,262,190 Jonathon Webb, Highbridge, Somerset
1,003,560 Steve Tye, Kidderminster, Worcs

ARMOURDILLO (Code Masters)
29,300 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex
25,800 Andrew Bury, Kingswinford, W mids
22,800 P Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales

AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY (Gremlin Graphics)
51,223 Casey Gallacher, Swallowfield, Reading
29,478 Alex Montague-Smith, Trowbridge, Wilts
18,000 Sanjay Vaghela, Rugby, Warks

BARBARIAN (Palace Software)
160,000 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales
57,600 Stephen Simpson, Otley, W Yorks
44,450 Colin Box, Doncaster, S Yorks

BEAMRIDER (Activision)
980,420 Steve Jarratt, ZZAP! Towers
642,704 Michael Sung, Peterlee, Co Durham
272,174 Steve Tye, Kidderminster, Worcs

BMX SIMULATOR (Codemasters)
6,285 Barry Mills, Denny, Scotland
4,420 Jap, Ettingshall Park, Wolverhampton
4,260 Adrian Broadley, Manby, Lincs

BREAKTHRU (US Gold)
246,000 Vincent Old, Wellingborough, Northants
138,050 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
111,900 Gary Rice, Colchester, Essex

BULLDOG (Gremlin Graphics)
2,238,200 Gary Footitt, Droylsden, Manchester
2,185,900 Peter Walker, Adelaide, S Australia
1,825,700 Roger Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden

COBRA (Ocean)
285,900 Philip Stevens, Alfreton, Derbyshire
93,400 Patrick Green, Burnley, Lancs
89,200 Stephen Wildridge, Great Sutton, S Wirral

CRYSTAL CASTLES (US Gold)
677,992 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
668,995 Richard Hardbattle, Nuneaton, Warks
652,127 Iain Davidson, Dumfries, Scotland

DECATHLON (Firebird)
12,255 D Rice, Southgate, London
11,599 Steve Tye, Kidderminster, Worcs
11,068 Stephen Simpson, Otley, W Yorks

DECEPTOR (US Gold)
27,050 Steven King, Plymouth, Devon
13,510 Trenoy Gaetan, Brussels, Belgium

DEFENDER OF THE CROWN (Mirrorsoft)
Completed by:
May 1200, Henrik Sylow, Arhus, Denmark
March 1201, Van Crombrugge Bart, Antwerp, Belgium

DELTA (Thalamus)
1,992,579 Michael Aubert, Exeter, Devon
1,258,430 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
972,636 Andrew Simmonds, E Studdal, Kent

DRAGON'S LAIR (Software Projects)
63,997 Sean Walker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
36,642 Simon Cole's Mum, Chelmsford, Essex
33,750 Simon Cole, Chelmsford, Essex

DUET (Elite)
174,290 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs
168,170 Fu Sang Li, Crewe, Cheshire
159,110 Gary Smith, Basingstoke, Hants

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE (Software Projects)
104,800 Leon White, Consett, Co Durham
92,742 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
88,588 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs

EXPRESS RAIDER (US Gold)
68,450 Gavin Shute, Aylesbury, Bucks
60,600 Dean Ferguson, Gillingham, Kent
49,500 Bharat Vaghela, Rugby, Warks

THE EQUALIZER (The Power House)
20,620 Dean Stinton, Botley, Southampton
14,850 Jonathan Richards, Attleborough, Warks
13,120 Graeme Crichton, Irvine, Ayrshire

FIRELORD (Hewson)
145,205 Richard Pargeter, Coventry, W Mids
143,160 Daniel Osbourne, Hornsea, N Humbs
116,805 Damian Ward, Harrogate, W Yorks

FIRETRACK (Electric Dreams)
835,640 Darren Cole, Chingford, London
664,960 Kristian Bruun, Copenhagen, Denmark
527,290 Johnny Larsen, Copenhagen, Denmark

FIST II (Melbourne House)
1,753,000 Steven Rolf, Kettering, Northants
1,560,800 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
1,220,000 Steven Guilfoyle, Oldham

GALIVAN (Imagine)
293,000 Steven Ward, Doncaster, S Yorks
287,000 Chris McLean, Helsby, Cheshire

GAME OVER (Imagine)
99,400 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Wales

GAUNTLET – DEEPER DUNGEONS (US Gold)
Merlin The Wizard
8,787,195 Asher Rashid, Thornaby, Cleveland
4,350,297 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol
4,308,061 Michael Robertson, Stirlingshire, Scotland

Thor The Warrior
4,678,932 David Taylor, Alvington, Glos
3,974,521 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol
3,232,197 Dean Thomas, Powys, Wales

Questor the Elf
8,746,238 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
2,497,341 Paul Cashley, Bishopston, Bristol

Thyra the Valkyrie
6,416,327 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
818,692 Paul Hollington, Hullbridge, Essex

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS (Elite)
920,800 Casey Gallacher, Swallowfield, Reading
531,890 Christian Major, Norwich, Norfolk
456,060 Chris Goodswen, Norwich, Norfolk

GUNSHIP (Microprose)
278,785 Richard Mellor, Bridgewater, Somerset
271,835 Mark Slavin, Leadgate, Co Durham
265,990 David Nicol, Heworth, York

HADES NEBULA (Nexus)
383,200 David Theys, Schilde, Belgium

HEAD OVER HEELS (Ocean)
88,620 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
88,140 Richard Lunn, Leeds, W Yorks
88,140 Robert Bowe, Otford, Kent

HERCULES (Alpha/Omega)
1,159,880 Thomas Broers, Lundflata, Norway
999,870 Rob Evans, Tring, Herts
911,300 Steven Boswell, Telford, Shropshire

HERO (Firebird)
197,852 Lawson Davies, Pencoed, S Wales
177,762 Patrick Lammers, 1400 Nivelles, Belgium
174,049 Paul Morrison, Consett, Co Durham

I,BALL (Firebird)
104,040 Marc Johnson, Broughton, Chester
51,600 Stephen Raggett, Westbourne Pk, London
50,854 Mark Andrews, Netherton, W Mids

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST (Pandora)
2,186,800 Guy Gilding, Slough, Berks
1,637,600 Peter Reilly, Bury-St-Edmunds, Suffolk
1,143,300 M Booman, Oud-Beijerland, The Netherlands

IRIDIS ALPHA (Llamasoft)
599,760 George Bray, Armthorpe, Doncaster
349,520 Colin Redfern, Heywood, Lancs
204,390 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx

JAILBREAK (Konami)
356,500 C Mitchell, Petersfield, Hants
195,500 Paul Gibson, Sunderland, Tyne And Wear
102,500 Malcolm Redfern, Preston, Lancs

JEEP COMMAND (Bug Byte)
518,550 G Meeusen, 2230 Schilde, Belgium
303,990 J Gheorghisor (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
250,350 Dave Breed, Cullercoats, Tyne & Wear

KNUCKLEBUSTERS (Melbourne House)
11,700 Craig Bent, Failsworth, Manchester
6,300 Steve Quinnell, New Eltham, London
5,700 Bharat Vaghela, Rugby, Warks

KRAKOUT (Gremlin Graphics)
21,184,770 Michael Eikmans, The Netherlands
12,740,800 Dave & Brett Warburton, Cheshire
3,068,500 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex

LIGHTFORCE (FTL)
3,239,250 Richard Burgman, Seaford, Essex
2,526,975 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
2,296,360 Taki Liberopoulos, Athens, Greece

MARIO BROTHERS (Ocean)
449,380 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
252,620 Ozz, New Eltham, London
134,120 Linus Jorner, Orebro, Sweden

METROCROSS (US Gold)
387,550 Andy Stocks, Grimsby, S Humberside
362,850 Andrew Holmes, Bottesford, Notts
311,700 Louis Farnham, Twickenham, Middlesex

MILK RACE (Mastertronic)
7,965 Kristian Fulfitt, Estover, Plymouth
7,964 Chris Raynham, Belper, Derby
7,949 Shaun Gore, King's Lynn, Norfolk

MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE (Databyte)
1,127,500 W Drew, Brisbane, Australia
801,800 Jennifer Yates, Bolton, Lancs
412,450 Adam Trewella, Stapleton, Bristol

MUTANTS (Ocean)
66,209,750 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex
51,644,500 Adie Bonner, Southbourne
31,025,750 Gareth Williams, Swansea, W Glamorgan

NEMESIS THE WARLOCK (Martech)
37,460 Anthony Scotthorne, Worksop, Notts
14,290 Andrew Scully, Brincliffe, Sheffield
12,770 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Mid Glam

NINJA MASTER (Mastertronic)
485,840 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Morayshire
198,880 Robert Futter, Downham Market, Norfolk
196,315 Michael Pihl, Kumla, Sweden

NOMAD (Ocean)
5,264 John Gheorghisor, (Runsoft), Australia
4,065 Paul Want, Harrogate, N Yorks
3,885 Paul Tudor, Stourbridge, Pedmore

OLLI AND LISSA (Firebird)
19,820 Lee Barker, Northwich, Cheshire
14,898 Stuart Scattergood, Address not included
13,715 Henderik Engelsman, Maassluis, Holland

PANTHER (Mastertronic)
250,900 Liam Chivers, Battenhall, Worcs
215,500 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey
200,940 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey



GH SCORING HEROES

PAPERBOY (Elite)
390,995 Michael Aubert, Exeter, Devon
301,400 Mark Rolf, Kettering, Northants
300,700 John White, Whitefield, Manchester

PARADROID PLUS (Hewson)
86,500 Brian Yeo, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
63,200 Adam Beabies, Tarbolton, Ayrshire
56,215 Iain Kent, Milngavie, Glasgow

PARALLAX (Ocean)
106,850 Ali Kerswell, Guildford, Surrey
89,300 Jason Birnie, Cranleigh, Surrey
78,400 Adam Pracy, Newton Flotman, Norwich

PARK PATROL (Firebird)
999,990 Greg Murphy, Moreton, Wirral
996,130 Steven Atkinson, Oldham, Lancs
995,610 Jonathan Edge, Waverton, Cheshire

POD (Mastertronic)
2,178,690 Grahame Rae, Bo'ness, Scotland
1,468,440 Karsten Toksvig, 8832 SKAIS, Denmark
1,082,440 Matthew Penn, Ormskirk, Lancashire

PROHIBITION (Infogrames)
$18,280 Richard Pargeter, Coventry, W Mids

QUARTET (Activision)
2,874,500 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E sussex
910,900 Les Ozouets, St Peter Port, Guernsey
362,431 Neil Ridley, E Leigh, Hants

RANARAMA (Hewson)
4,828,400 Richard Leadbetter, Witham, Essex
1,822,200 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
1,555,700 Martin Draper, Alfreton, Derby

RE-BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
3,485,090 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
2,470,584 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
1,405,220 Greg Murphy, Moreton, Wirral

RIVER RAID (Firebird)
259,235 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
131,020 Jonathan Richards, Attleborough, Warks

ROAD RUNNER (US Gold)
285,000 Andrew Dallyn, Braunton, Devon
282,860 Paul Dunstan, High Wycombe, Bucks
272,320 Roger Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden

ROCK 'N' WRESTLE (Melbourne House)
3,125,100 Jamie Orridge, Gedling, Nottingham
2,655,200 Alan Smith, Glenrothers, Fife
941,300 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen

SABOTEUR (Durell)
£2,789,600 Gareth Mitchell, Mirfield, W Yorks
£2,115,200 Per Jorner, Orebro, Sweden
£2,038,200 Linus Jorner, Orebro, Sweden

SANXION (Thalamus)
1,006,466 Steven Malpass, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs
784,390 Stephen Gandy, Halesowen, W Mids
517,860 Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs

SCOOBY DOO (Elite)
304,700 Robert Wakefield, Newcastle, Stoke-on-Trent
248,600 Sean McDonagh, Jarrow, Tyne & Wear
194,550 Gareth Mackie, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire

SHAO-LIN'S ROAD (The Edge)
128,420 Damian Boocock, Colne, Lancs
73,670 Barry Mills, Denny, Scotland
36,164 Steven Young, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear

SHOCKWAY RIDER (FTL)
1,524,798 Matthew Phypers, Sunnyhill, Derby
291,000 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
88,350 Howard Worton, Southwark, London

SILENT SERVICE (US Gold/Microprose)
(TONS SUNK)
1,032,800 Guy Gilding, Slough, Berks
910,100 Karsten Tokisuig, Drosselvej 6, Denmark
563,100 Steven Hall, Croughton, N Hants

SKATE ROCK (Bubble Bus)
326,380 Brian Hambley, Prescot, Merseyside
288,430 Justin Cole, Huddersfield, W Yorks
239,020 Sean Walker, (Runsoft), Australia

SKY RUNNER (Cascade)
$669,700 John Doyle, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire
$585,700 Paresh Solanki, Forest Gate, London
$190,600 Martin Dobson, London E12

SKOOL DAZE (Micromega)
126,910 Anthony Duiker (Runsoft), Melbourne, Australia
120,780 Gordon Shearer, Rothes, Morayshire
104,340 Scott Moore, Fixby, Huddersfield

SLAMBALL (Americana)
7,462,660 Carleton Shaw, London, N10
5,801,720 C Harbinson, Rumney, Cardiff
5,504,870 Gavin Burnett, Westhill, Inverness

SLAP FIGHT (Imagine)
586,000 Matthew Viveash, Chinnor, Oxon
147,775 David Scouller, Billingham, Cleveland
137,560 Cleveland Gibbon, Erdington, W Mids

SPLIT PERSONALITIES (Domark)
683,500 Keith Lenton, Halesowen, W Mids
680,400 Mrs L Hayden, London E16
665,200 Mrs J Carroll, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset

STAR PAWS (Software Projects)
446,570 Shaun Gore, King's Lynn, Norfolk
427,014 Justin Allen, Edgeware, Middx
393,849 C Mitchell, Petersfield, Hants

STARQUAKE (Bubble Bus)
287,763 Nigel Froud, Godalming, Surrey
287,140 Ove Knudseu, 5033 Fyllingsdaleu, Norway
273,667 Per Kjellander, Stenungsund, Sweden

STREET SURFER (Bubble Bus)
21,108 Jonathan Stock, Denton, Northampton
16,270 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
15,811 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex

SUPER CYCLE (US Gold/Epyx)
342,650 Bryan Chamberlain, Norwich, Norfolk
328,860 Leigh O'Connell, Murrumbeena, Australia
320,160 A Verhaeghe, Bletchley, Bucks

TENTH FRAME (US Gold/Access)
AMATEUR
300 Stefan Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden
290 David Riddick, Ilkeston, Derby
290 Les Stahl, Queensland, Australia

PROFESSIONAL
300 Stefan Alexandersson, Goteborg, Sweden
233 Neil Taylor, Bracknell, Berks
214 Graeme Dutch, Tillydrone, Aberdeen

TERRA CRESTA (Imagine)
402,100 Michael Dunajew, Adelaide, Australia
371,800 Robert Hemphill, Port Glasgow, Renfrewshire
341,000 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks

THING BOUNCES BACK (Gremlin Graphics)
1,649,973 Mick Kinsman, New Malden, Surrey
1,338,108 Steve Bennett, Prestatyn, Clwyd
1,134,940 Iain Davidson, Dumfries, Scotland

THRUST (Firebird)
4,764,950 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorks
4,182,050 Arlo Swinson, Doncaster, S Yorks
3,500,800 Declan Quinn, Bessbrook, Newry Co Down

THUNDERBOLT (Codemasters)
213,220 Robert Troughton, Keighley, W Yorks
164,450 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E sussex

TOY BIZARRE (Activision)
223,420 J D Oliver, Ipswich, Suffolk
144,700 Sherif Salama, Cairo, Egypt
102,900 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

TRAILBLAZER (Gremlin Graphics)
1,123,350 Jason Cooper, Wednesbury, W Mids
1,120,040 Henry Rawlinson, Salisbury, Wilts
828,270 Ian Robinson, Tottenham, London

TRAP (Alligata)
481,900 Lawry Simm, Liverpool L23
429,510 Colin Bayne, Glenrothes, Fife
328,500 Robert Elliot, Middlesborough, Cleveland

UCHI MATA (Martech)
382,590 Nicolas Gielen, Brussels, Belgium
378,760 Mark Sexton, Lancing, W Sussex
353,795 Nicholas Lester, Dudley, W Mids

URIDIUM PLUS (Hewson)
244,505 Michael Lykke, Viborg, Denmark
221,290 Stephen Paget, Uckfield, Sussex
197,925 Russell Wallace, Co Dublin, Ireland

VIDEO MEANIES (Mastertronic)
250,541 Stuart Scattergood, Clwyd, N Wales
135,159 Sean McMenamin, Clarkston, Glasgow
130,822 Warren Pilkington, Longsight, Manchester

VOIDRUNNER (Mastertronic)
6,253,825 Grant Bannister, Luton, Beds
5,997,326 D Rice, Southgate, London
5,403,560 Mick Wall, Hillsborough, Sheffield

WARHAWK (Firebird)
6,229,526 Glenn Haworth, Swallow, Lincs
4,459,784 Hamish Patel, Northolt, Middlesex
3,322,648 Jamie Orridge, Gedling, Nottingham

WEST BANK (Gremlin Graphics)
306,750 Stephen Raggett, Westbourne Pk, London
210,000 Jon Cullen, Hillgate, Stockport
141,250 Mark Huck, Washington, Tyne & Wear

WIZARD'S LAIR (Bubble Bus)
242,645 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
154,140 Craig Wills, Taunton, Somerset
152,735 Steven Medcraft, Rayleigh, Essex

WONDER BOY (Activision)
353,160 Jason Langmead, Vale, Guernsey
347,410 Adie Griffiths, Crowborough, E Sussex
244,910 Jason Hone, Crofton Park, England

XEVIOUS (US Gold)
824,380 Fintan Brady, Virginia, Ireland
412,940 Matthew Ward, Bromley, Kent
341,060 Rami Hanninen, Espoo, Finland

YIE AR KUNG-FU (Imagine)
4,184,000 Nicholas Lester, Dudley, W mids
4,098,200 Barry Mills, Denny, Scotland
1,307,000 Gavin Conway, Paisley, Scotland

YIE AR KUNG-FU II (Imagine)
288,300 Carl Adams, Tooting, London
183,300 Ian Coulter, Leeds
166,100 Steven Bramley, Bromley, Kent

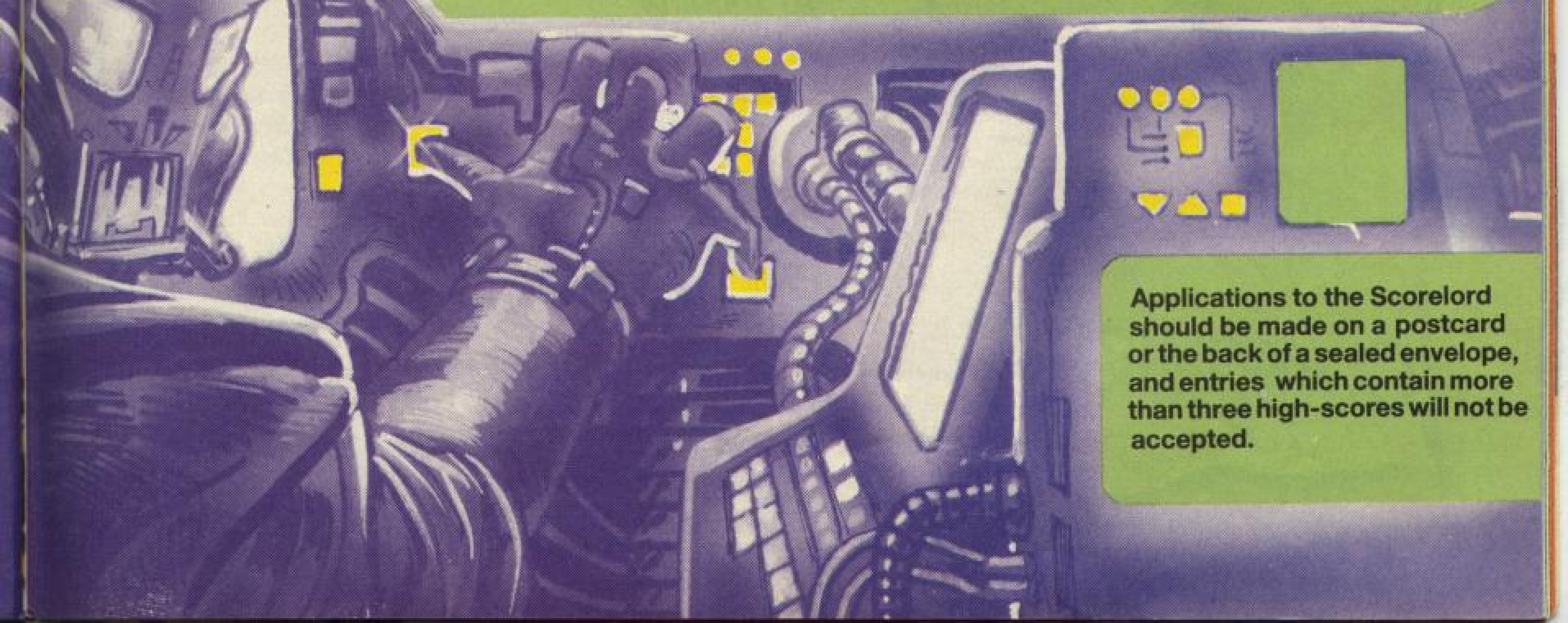
Z (Rhino)
701,250 Howard Clarke, Inverness, Scotland
671,450 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
576,200 Stephen Ross, Ryde, Isle of Wight

ZENJI (Firebird)
19,460 Michael Brown, Northallerton, N Yorks
19,345 Justin Allen, Edgeware, Middx

ZOLYX (Firebird)
295,693 Paul Cropper, Wokingham, Berks
294,320 Rob Evans, Tring, Herts
261,608 Nick Aulton, Solihull, W Mids

ZONE RANGER (Firebird)
20,316 Marc Spence, Middleton, Leeds
14,650 Jonathan Wood, Edgeware, Middx
12,904 Mrs Sue McGovern, Leighton Buzzard, Beds

ZYNAPS (Hewson)
198,440 Mark Andrews, Netherton, W Mids
162,300 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Wales
126,9?0 David Hopkins, Netherton, W Mids



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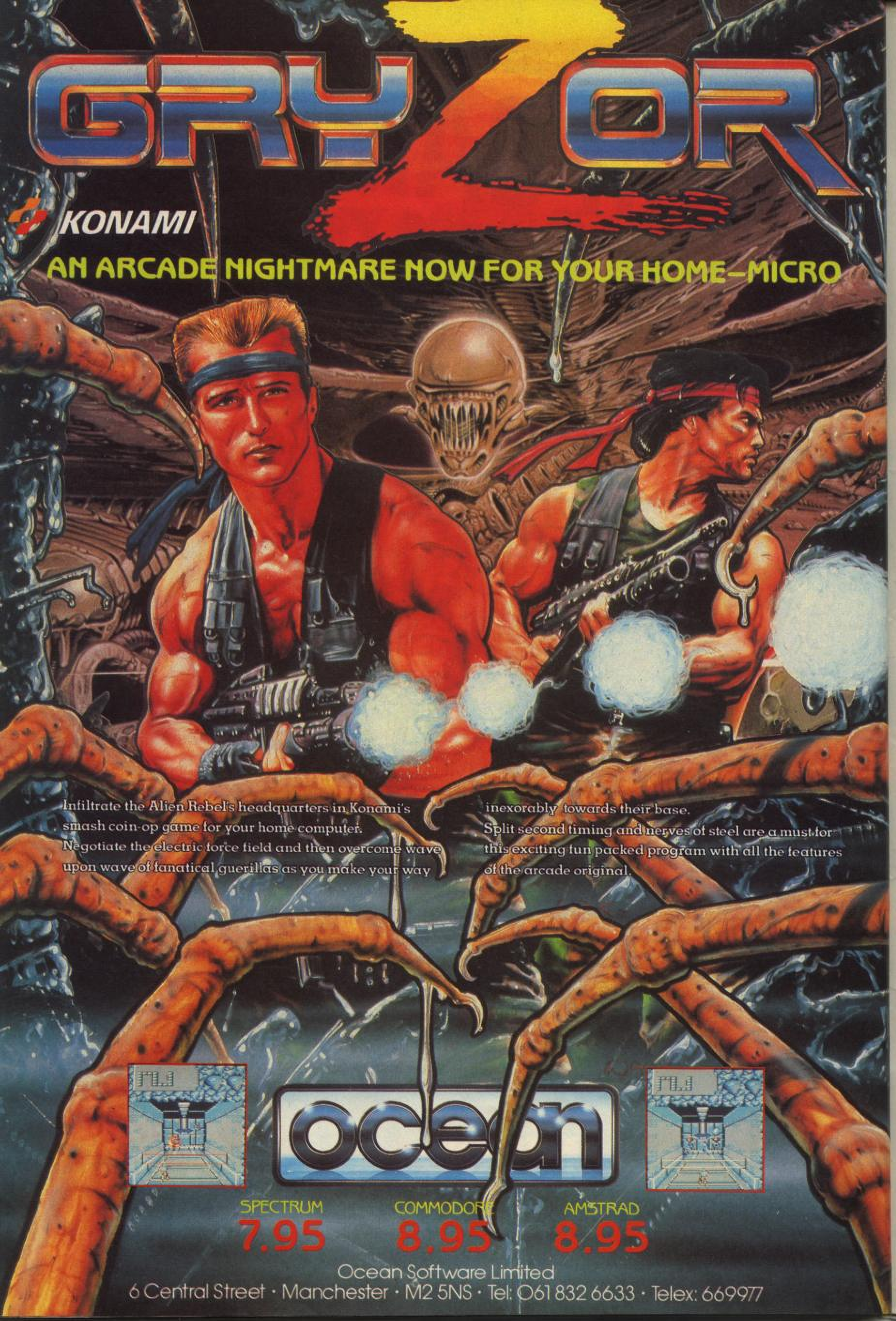
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CHEAP AND CHEERFUL

ZZAP!'s monthly round-up of budget software

New recruit, Dan Gilbert (who arrived too late to be introduced in this months' editorial) casts a fresh, but sharp eye over the latest batch of budget bargains. Take it away Mr Giblet . . .

BEACH HEAD II
Americana, £2.99

This classic Sizzler was first reviewed way back in Issue 4 and was awarded 90%. Now US Gold have given it a new lease of life by releasing it on their budget label, Americana.

The plot concerns a Dictator who has captured allied soldiers and is holding them prisoner on his remote island. A crack squad of commandos is sent to their rescue.

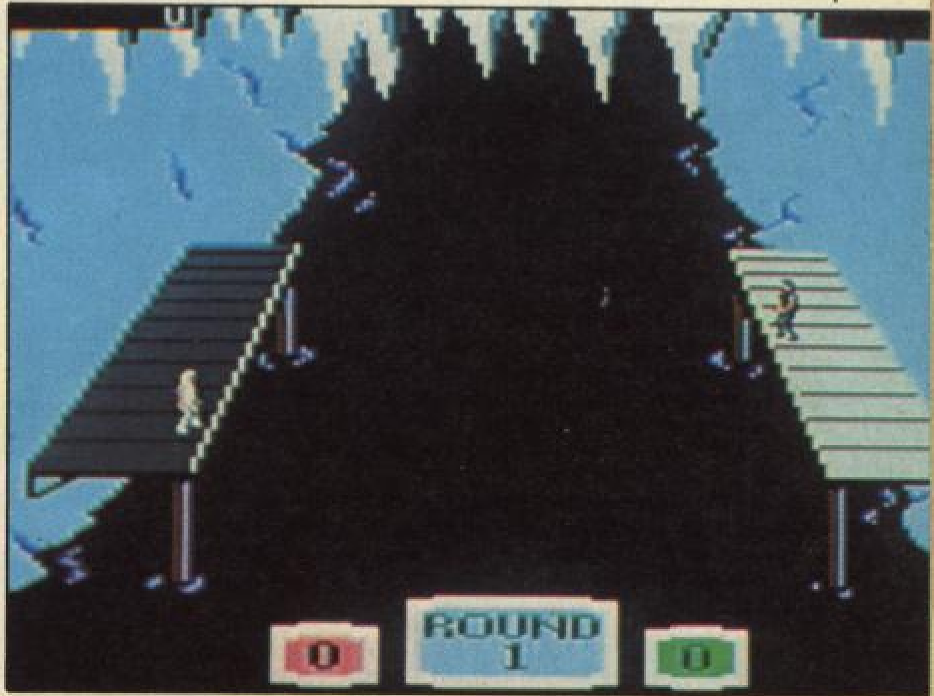
Beach Head II is played three ways: one player takes the role of either the Dictator or leader of the assault team, or two players battle it out simultaneously in a head-to-head.

The action is played over four independently loaded scenes. The first is 'Attack', where the commando team is parachuted in by helicopter. The Dictator controls a machine gun and blasts the soldiers as they rush down the screen. Next comes 'Rescue' where the Dictator's forces are used to kill captives before they escape the prison.

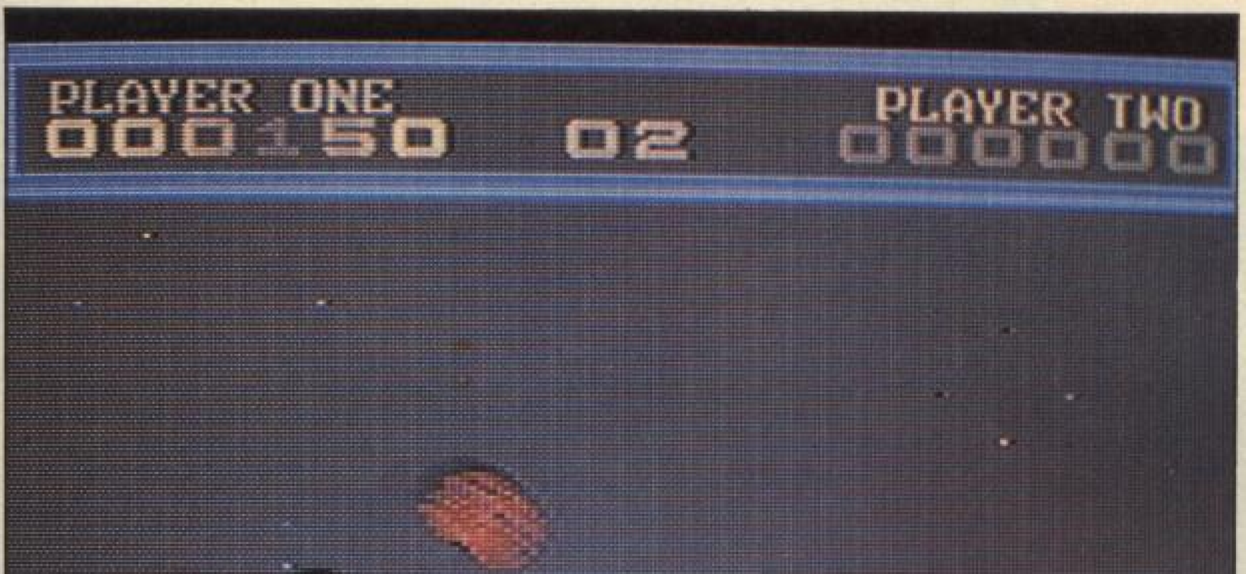
If the prisoners are rescued, they're flown by helicopter up a 3D vertically scrolling screen. The Dictator's army is out in force again, this time to blow the 'chopper out of the sky before it reaches safety. Finally, there's a thrilling knife fight between the Dictator and the leader of the commando team, and there can be only one survivor . . .

Beach Head II is simply superb, and boasts some lovely graphics and a huge range of sampled voices. The gameplay is very bloody, but extremely enjoyable, and at the price it's a steal.

OVERALL 94%



▶ Fill in the holes and let the cutesie Blob family bounce their way to the end of the screen



HYBER BLOB
Firebird, £2.99

In this oddity from Firebird, one or two players attempt to keep a group of blobpods, small leaping faces, constantly moving from left to right along a horizontally scrolling landscape comprised of blocks. This sounds a little on the simplistic side, but the pods must always bounce on solid ground – when a gap is reached they fall off the bottom of the screen and die.

The action is controlled with a cursor, which picks up blocks from one part of the landscape and drops them over gaps in another. As well avoiding gaps, there are killer blocks (which vaporise when a blobpod passes over), immovable blocks (which speak for themselves), and mutant blobpods (which eat blocks away) to watch out for. To add a little more pressure, the task of moving all the blobpods from the left side of the 'squarescape' to the right is played against a time limit!

Although *Hyber Blob* is great fun to play, and gets very challenging later on, there's little variety in the gameplay – consequently some players may become bored rather quickly. If you like reaction games which require plenty of very quick thinking though, try it out.

OVERALL 80%



ON-COURT TENNIS
Firebird Silver, £1.99

Tennis simulations aren't that common these days, so this Activision re-release is quite notable.

There are a decent set of options, including a choice of three surfaces, the chance to play the best of three or five sets, four different computer opponents and two player or demo modes. The control allows a wide variety of shots, from smashes and lobs to slices and hard topspins. Service is also very realistic, with similarly varied options.

Having said how close to the real thing this is, it is also just as difficult to play, and it can be infuriating when, for instance, the ball bounces under your racket. Sports fans should give this a look, but I think the gameplay might well prove a little too frustrating for the average user.

OVERALL 75%

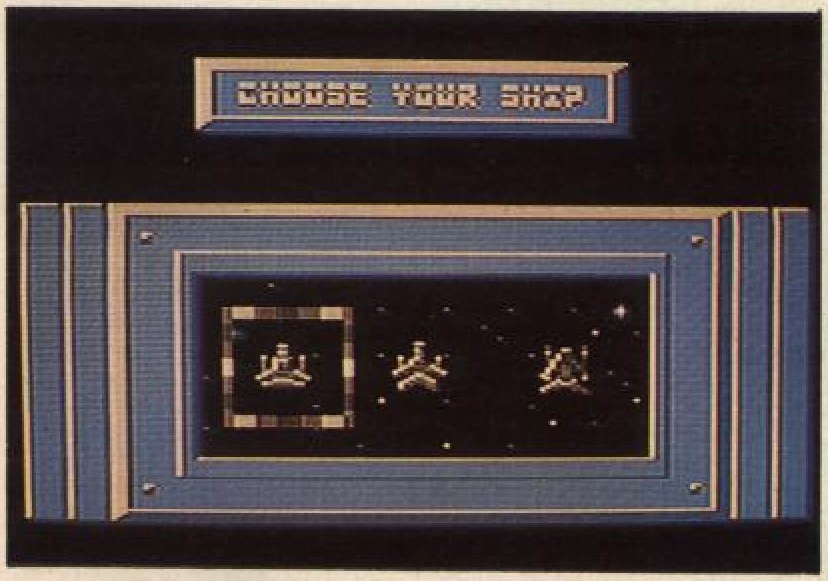
PIRATES IN HYPERSPACE
Alternative Software, £1.99

In this budget shoot 'em up, the player takes the part of a space pirate intent on pillaging an immensely valuable microscopic life form. To achieve this end, he tackles a heavily armed fleet of 21 cargo ships, boards them one at a time and steals their precious substance from under robot guard.

The action is played over three stages. The first is a vertically scrolling shooting section where the player battles through fleets of guard ships. Occasionally, energising stars appear and are picked up when run into. When three stars are collected, an assault on the cargo ship is undertaken. The ship in question appears at the top of the screen and shoots fireballs while the attacker registers as many hits as possible. If enough hits are sustained, the ship is boarded and searched.

The fast and furious gameplay is sometimes a little rough, with disappointingly monochromatic graphics and very limited sound. Having said that, it's fairly playable, and has enough appeal to make it a reasonable buy.

OVERALL 58%



► **Choose the ship you would most like to be blown to bits in**

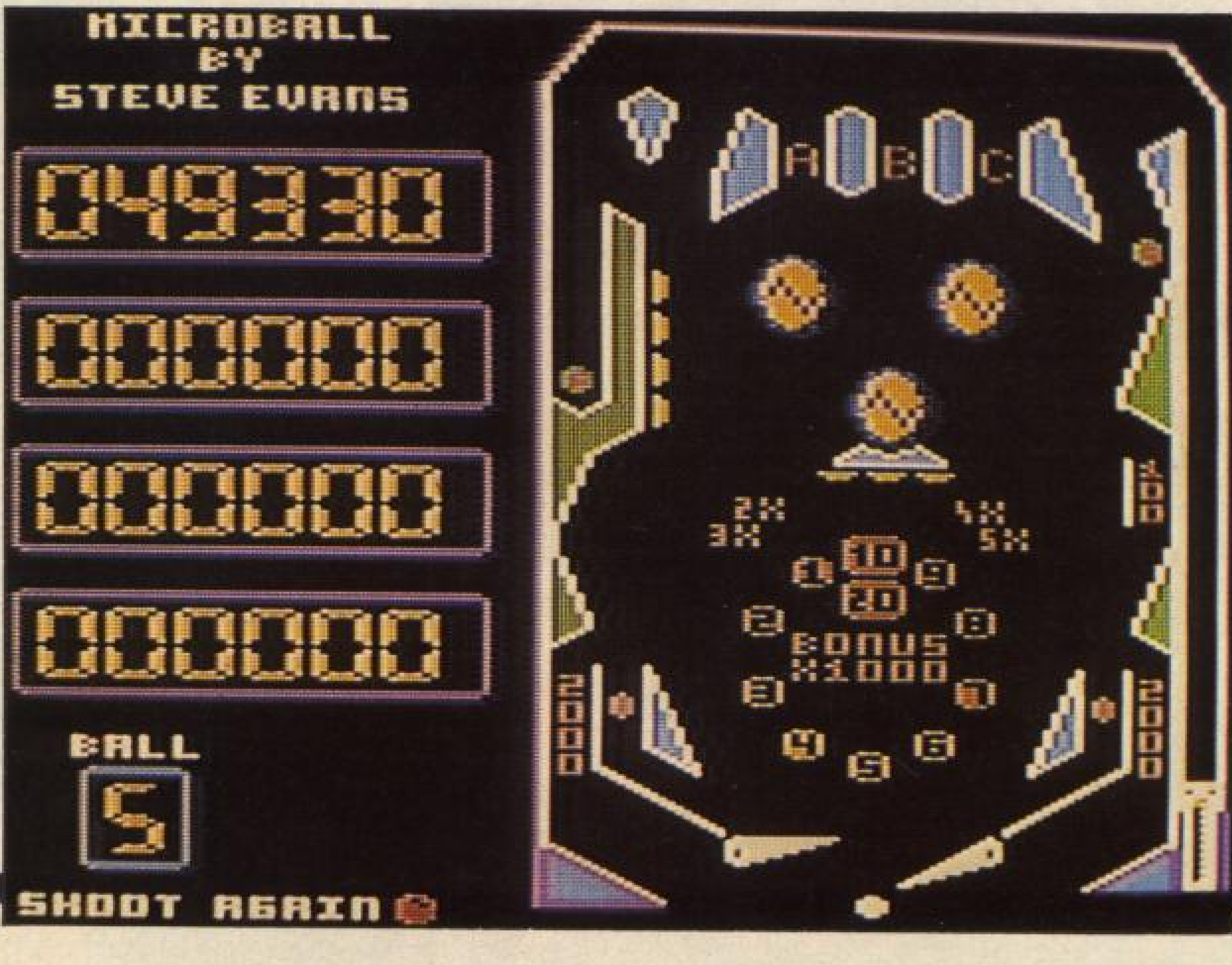
MICROBALL
Alternative Software, £1.99

Microball is a pinball simulation written by Steve Evans, author of *Guardian*. Between one and four players each have five balls with which to register the highest score. The table is fairly basic table, and features shoot targets, magnets, a bonus tube and roll-overs.

The gameplay isn't brilliant, with none-too-realistic gravity and very digital flippers (that is, they only have two positions). Compared to the what now aging *Pinball Construction Set* is capable of producing, the play is bland, and even dedicated pinball fanatics will find it ultimately tiresome.

OVERALL 73%

► **Be a pinball wizard for two quid – with Steve Evans' *Microball***



SUNBURST
Rack-it, £1.99

Rack-it's release this month is a multi-directionally scrolling space shoot 'em up which centres around a series of star systems, each with a huge sun at its centre.

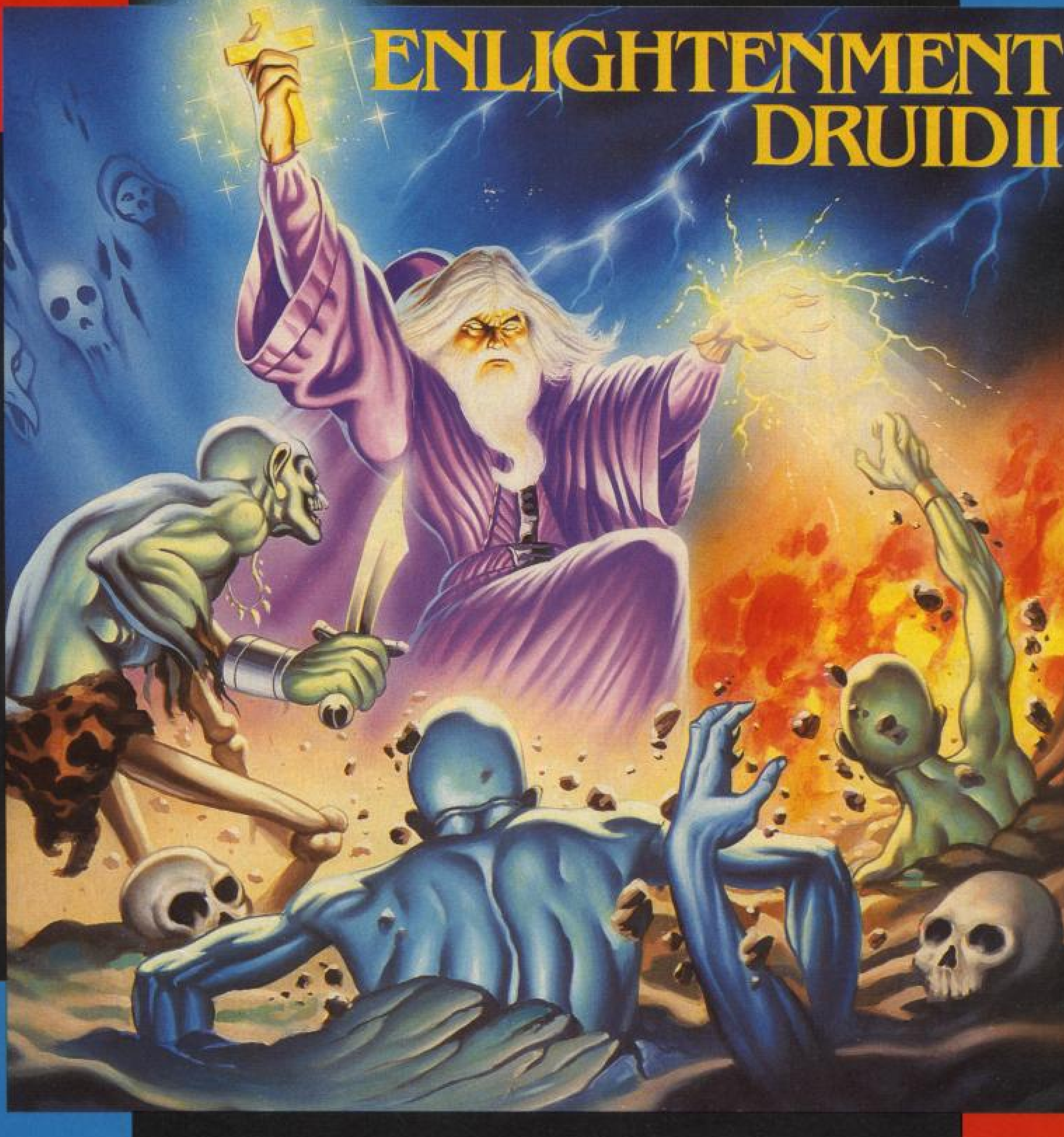
The first system, a bubble-like alien environment, is home to a vicious race of beasts – spinners, phantoms and octopods to name but a few – who home in on the player's ship, depleting its energy on contact. If too many hits are sustained the vessel is destroyed.

The aim is to survive attacks from these aliens and to destroy the carriers, a species that transports energy around the system. Blasting these leaves a decaying energy pod that remains intact for 10 seconds. When enough pods have been collected, as displayed on an energy meter, the ship is guided into the sun, which vaporises. With the mission accomplished, the player moves onto the next, more difficult level.

Sunburst is very smart looking game with brilliant scrolling backdrops and some really neat sprites. The gameplay is a touch repetitive however, and is also marred by some dodgy collision detection – the ship sometimes explodes without touching anything. Entertaining for a while, but doomed to end up gathering dust on the software shelf.

OVERALL 67%

FIREBIRD



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INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

US Gold £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick or keys





Indiana Jones is back: Fedora donned, stubble designed, and whip cracked, ready for more heroic deeds in US Gold's latest arcade conversion.

The player is given control of the legendary adventurer as he travels to India in pursuit of the Sankara stone, stolen from the remote village of Mayapore by the Maharaja. Once protected by this artifact, the town now lies devastated. The thoroughly nasty Maharajah has made his palace into a worshipping ground for the Thuggee death cult, and has the village children working down his gem mines.

In the first of three screens, Indy travels through the platform-like mine caverns, climbing ladders and crossing narrow passages in search of caged children. Pressing fire makes his whip lash out, which kills snakes and forces pursuing Thuggee guards off the platforms. Constant lashing is vital to Indy's survival, as contact with a guard or snake results in a loss of one of his five lives. If a cage is found, a crack of the whip breaks the lock and frees the imprisoned child.

Having released all seven children, Jones escapes down the mineshaft to level two. Here, he hurtles down the diagonally scrolling train track in a mine car, which is tilted left and right to avoid broken rails or change lanes to avoid dead-ends.

Having survived the course, Indy enters the final level – the Temple of Doom. To finish the screen he retrieves the Sankara stone from a statue of Kali, the goddess of death. The stone lies in the middle of a lava pit and is reached by negotiating a moving bridge.

Should the stone be recovered, Jones re-enters the first level (albeit with different layout) to begin a second adventure. Once three stones have been collected, a rope bridge is reached, and Indy escapes to safety.



I never liked the original arcade game that much – the gameplay is very weak, and once you've seen the brilliant graphics and heard the amazing sampled speech there's little incentive to put any more money in the machine. On the 64 you haven't got the speech and graphics capabilities, so you're left with a very simple three level game. None of the screens are challenging, and it only takes a few goes to master them. The worst thing of all is that more time is spent battling the unwieldy loading system than playing the actual game – which is very frustrating indeed. When you look at some of the original games around this month, like SEUCK, Zig Zag **and** Nebulus, **it makes you wonder whether there's any point in pouring money into non-starter projects like these.**



What's happened to my favourite hero? The less than brilliant coin-op has been converted in all its supposed glory to create an even less brilliant 64 game. Graphically, the second stage is the worst, with badly drawn and variably-sized rail cars whizzing along tracks of dubious perspective. Indiana makes like 'Automan', achieving sharp angled turns with unbelievable efficiency. There are so many niggling points: the unintelligent collision detection, poor animation, the dire soundtrack and, possibly the worst, a multiload system that loads in level one even when you've just died on it. It's all there in memory, but just to make sure, the program loads it all in again. Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom **should be called** Indiana Jones in the Program of Doom . . .



The stunning loading picture of Indy gives rise to high expectations. However, hopes are soon dashed when you start playing. The action is unbelievably frustrating, and the effectiveness of the whip seems to vary from second to second. The 'depth' of platforms doesn't register and you hit objects four feet away simply because you pass behind them – the collision detection between sprites is equally dodgy. The tune rapidly irritates, and the gameplay becomes very repetitive once the correct routes are known. To cap it all, there's a really pathetic multiload system to break up the action. Save your money for something more interesting.

PRESENTATION 38%
A very clumsy multiload system, and no options.

GRAPHICS 44%
The loading screen is the graphical highlight – the rest of the game is a jumble of poorly animated sprites and inept backdrops.

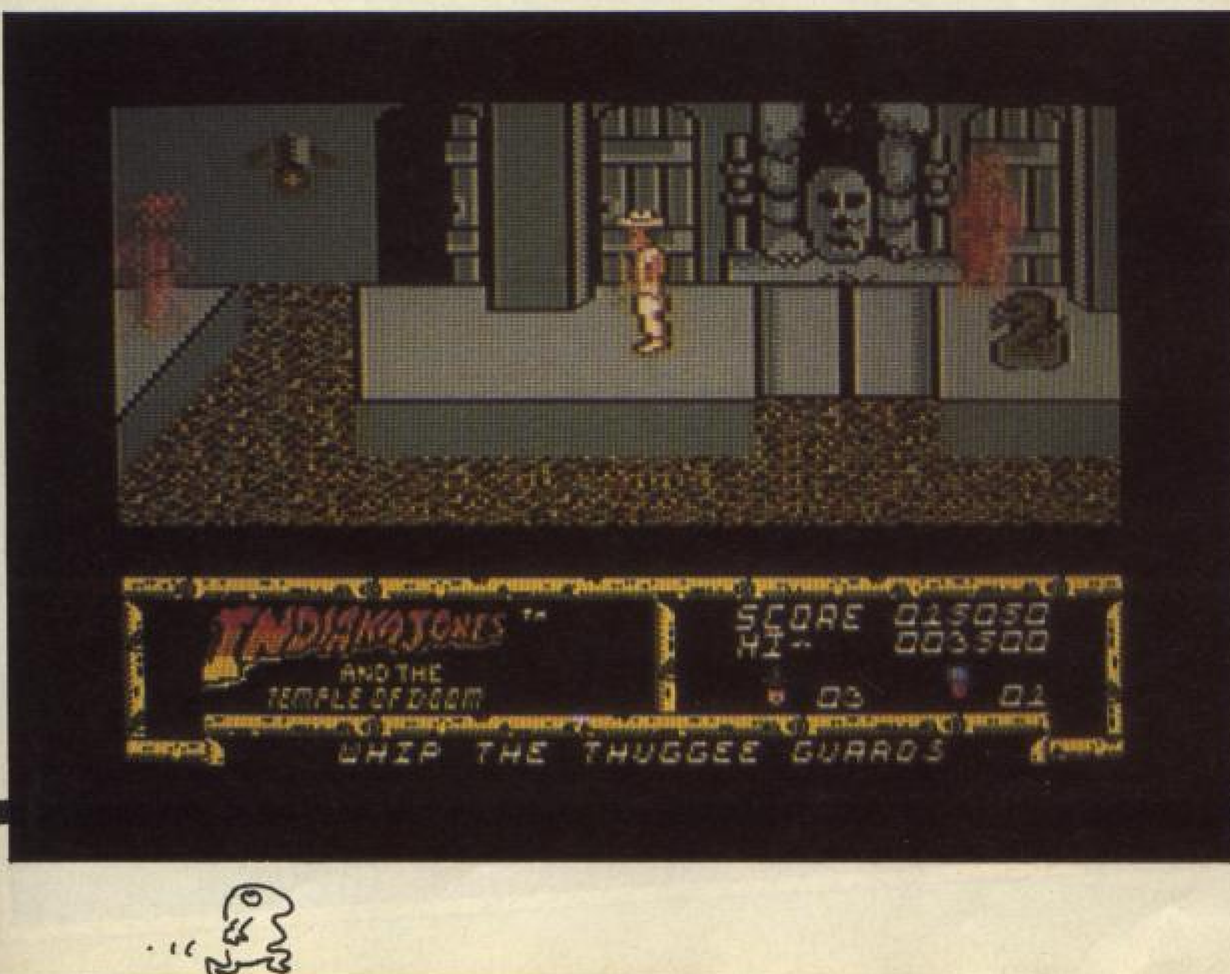
SOUND 39%
An abysmal rendition of the soundtrack drones along, supplemented by weak effects.

HOOKABILITY 46%
Initially spoiled by niggling weak spots in the gameplay, and the intrusive multiload only serves to further dampen the enthusiasm.

LASTABILITY 35%
Learning all the routes shouldn't take too long, but even this may prove too frustrating for some.

OVERALL 41%
A startlingly unimpressive arcade conversion.

▶ **Indy arrives at the Statue of Kali, in the depths of the Temple of Doom**



ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

ZIG ZAG

Mirrorsoft, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

● **Incredible 3D action in Tony Crowther's latest and greatest game**

The year is 2000-and-a-bit AD and the setting is the 12th Dimension School of Star Flight. A pupil is faced with the ultimate test: fly through the Matrix of Zog – a bewildering assortment of puzzles, aliens and traps – and collect the eight Crystals therein before the 144 minute time limit elapses.

The Matrix of Zog is presented as a multi-directionally scrolling 3D landscape, comprised of long passages, junctions and miscellaneous buildings. The player's ship is viewed from an overhead position and is controlled via the normal left/right, up/down commands. Turning corners, however, is only achieved by rebounding off one of the prisms located at every junction. The ship's course is effectively 'reflected' in the face of the prism: hitting a diagonal face turns the ship through 90 degrees, whereas hitting a flat face (or the walls of a building) causes the vessel to do a complete about-face. The mission objective, therefore, is to discover how to reach the eight gems, since many areas are only entered by particular routes determined by the positions of the prisms.

There are also small switches in the walls and floor which, when shot or flown over, toggle prisms and sections of wall into and out of existence. These form the basis for most of the puzzles: prisms that apparently send the craft into a blank wall are dependent on that section of wall being switched 'off'.

As the mission continues, the craft is attacked by a variety of enemies which range from bouncing killer frogs to small cube-shaped aliens. Collision with one of these results in a loss of one of the player's five ships. Blasting the aggressors earns money, which is used to buy equipment in one of the shops found around the landscape. The obtainable hardware varies in price and obscurity, from Infra-red and X-Ray vision to the vital Shield and Missile abilities. Having bought several of these accessories, the player goes off in search of the eight crystals which he finds to finish the task.

After listening to the brilliant tile music and sitting slack-jawed, watching the incredible title screen for a while, I finally started playing. At first I hated it: the control is very fiddly and confusing. Switching to the proper aircraft controls, however, soon put things right and allowed me to play properly. Zig Zag is, without question, a technically brilliant game. The landscape scrolls smoothly and the way that walls flick into existence is incredible. Shoot 'em up fans may not be so keen, but it boasts an impressive list of options and there's enough depth to keep maze freaks and mappers happy for ages.



► **Negotiating the Maze of Zog to discover the eight hidden crystals**

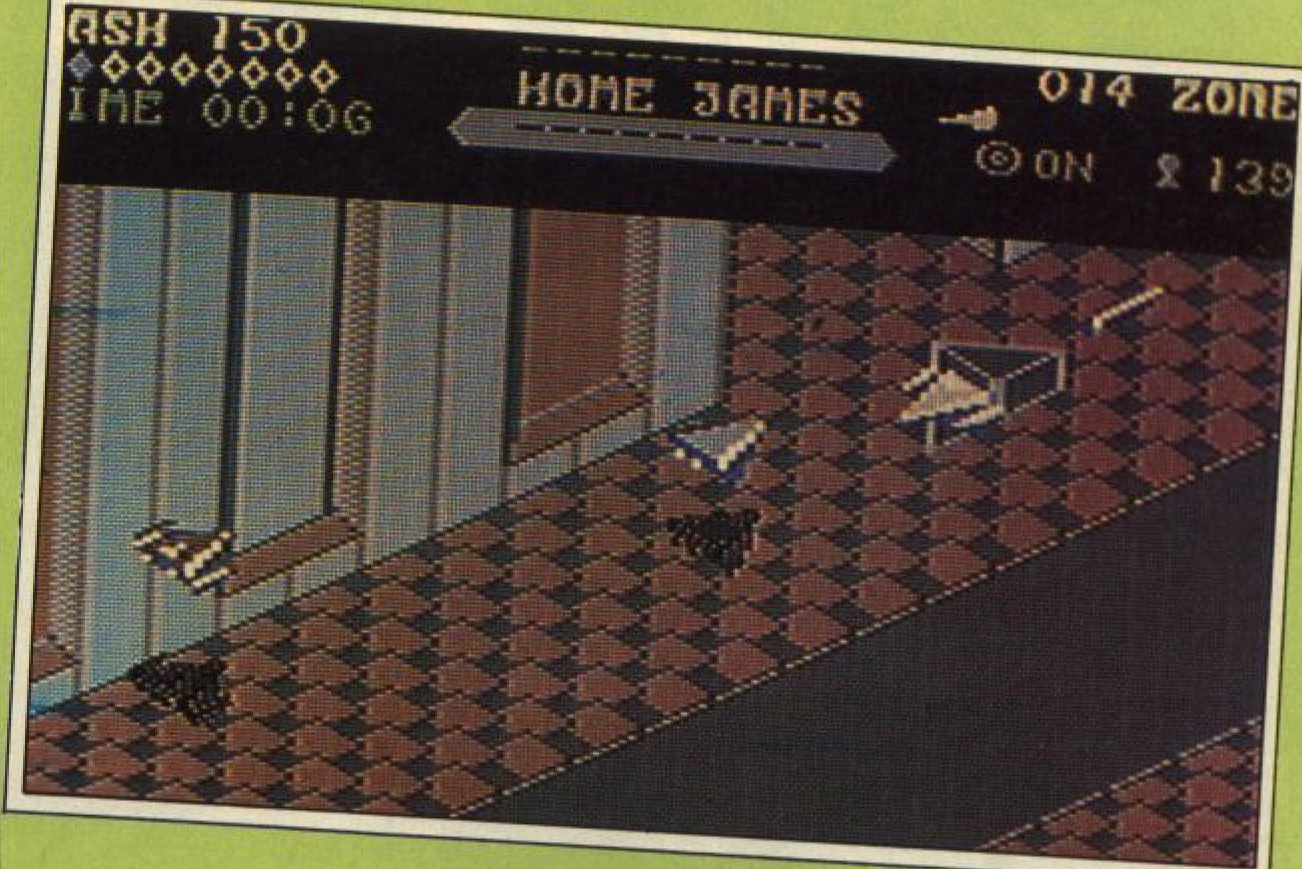


► **Superb 3D landscapes make up the maze's labyrinthine interior**





After a long string of mediocre disappointments, Tony Crowther returns to his old form with the superb Zig Zag. **It's a strange cross between** Zaxxon **and an arcade adventure, and boasts some fabulous graphics and very addictive gameplay. The objective is simple enough, but actually achieving it is a difficult and involved task. Exploring the landscape is an enjoyable occupation, and finding the location of switches and extra banks is very rewarding indeed, giving an even greater urge to continue! The smooth scrolling backdrops have a true feeling of depth, and the way walls appear and disappear is very clever indeed. The excellent music and sound effects also deserve a mention, and the title screen is nothing short of stunning.** Zig Zag **is an extremely slick and polished program that has been thoughtfully designed and brilliantly conceived.**



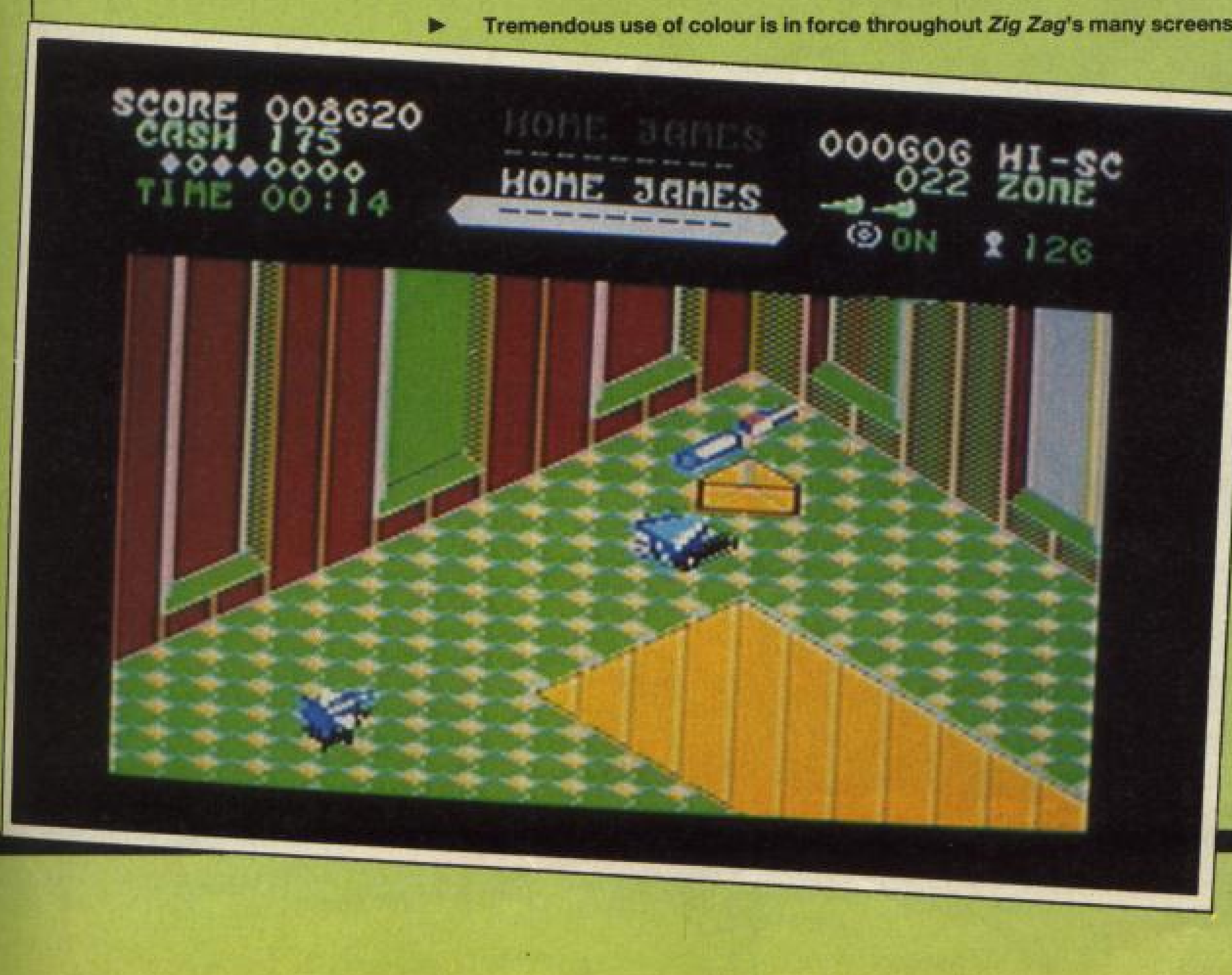
This game is just so much fun! From the moment you flip round the first corner, to the instant you lose your last life, you're hooked. It has one of the most unusual game styles I've seen, being a puzzle-solving shoot 'em up set in a maze. The program is extremely polished, feels very smooth, and is enhanced by an excellent sound track that, although slightly repetitive, keeps the tempo distinctly up-beat. Perhaps the nicest feature of all is the very humorous scenario which explains the prize for collecting all eight crystals: 'possibly the 13th dimension, untold riches, or a weekend for two in Bognor.' Nice one Mirrorsoft!

▶ **Plenty of blasting and strategy in Tony Crowther's latest and greatest maze game, *Zig Zag***



The mission doesn't have to be tackled as a brain teaser. An option on the title screen allows the player to choose a straight shoot 'em up game by turning all the puzzles off, enabling the ship to move freely throughout the whole map. However, the mission can't be solved in this fashion, but it's useful for mapping. The control method may also be changed from standard to 'pilot'.

▶ **Tremendous use of colour is in force throughout *Zig Zag*'s many screens**



PRESENTATION 95%
Numerous in-game options, equipment buying facility and a stupendous title screen.

GRAPHICS 88%
Perfectly smooth scrolling, lots of fast action and beautifully polished titles.

SOUND 90%
Excellent title and game soundtracks, with the alternative of high-class effects.

HOOKABILITY 88%
The control method is tricky to master, but once you start blasting and buying, it's VERY difficult to stop.

LASTABILITY 90%
An enormous map with masses to find, retrieve and shoot.

OVERALL 92%
An unusual, but highly polished shooting and exploring game.

ZZAP! TEST

THUNDERCATS

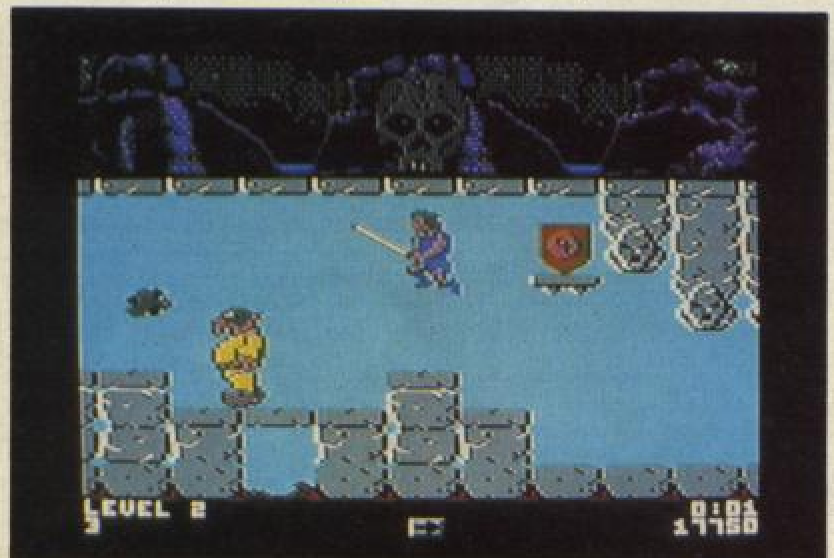
Elite, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Lion-o, Tygra, Panthro, Cheetara, Wilycat and Wilykit are a humanoid race of wildcats who were forced to flee their home planet, Thundera, when it was destroyed. Set adrift in a spacecraft, they crash-landed on an alien planet, ruled over by the inevitable baddie, Mumm-Ra, and his despicable minions, the Molemen. The Thundercats set up base in the Cat's Lair, and conflict between the feline heroes and Mumm-Ra soon followed.

During a daring raid by the Molemen, Tygra, Panthro and Wilykit were kidnapped, and the Eye of Thundera stolen. This mystical jewel energises the Sword of Omens, which in turn gives the Thundercats their powers. Since Lion-o was entrusted with the gem, he decides to infiltrate Mumm-Ra's fortress, castle Plun-Dar, retrieve the Eye and rescue his friends.

The player takes the role of sword-wielding Lion-o and battles across 14 horizontally scrolling levels to castle Plun-dar. Throughout the perilous journey, Molemen attack, removing one of Lion-o's five lives on contact. There are also bottomless pits which the heroic cat leaps across – falling into one spells instant doom. All is not bad though, and scattered throughout the landscape are supply boxes which are broken to give either a blaster, sword or extra life.

Progressing through the levels gives Lion-o the chance to rescue his allies: battling successfully through level three rescues Tygra, Panthro is held on level eight and Wilykit is found on the penultimate screen. When Wilykit is safe, Mumm-Ra himself attacks in a fight to the death. If the evil one is despatched, the Eye of Thundera is restored and the Thundercats may live in eternal peace and harmony . . .



▶ Lion-o continues his mission into Mumm-Ra's forbidding lair



Having never seen the Thundercats **on TV, I can't say whether or not this licence captures the atmosphere of the cartoon. However, as a computer game, it's good, and has an inexplicable addictive quality that keeps you coming back for more. The gameplay is similar to a fast and furious** Kung-Fu Master**, and getting to the final level should take a fair bit of practice. The graphics are unusual, and while the use of colour is odd, the overall effect is neat. There's a rousing Rob Hubbard title tune some and the sound effects are suitably loud. In fact there's only one niggle: it's possible to sit on level three and knock up an enormous score without doing much.** Thundercats **isn't an essential purchase by any means, but if you enjoy hacking games, this one has plenty of challenge and addiction.**

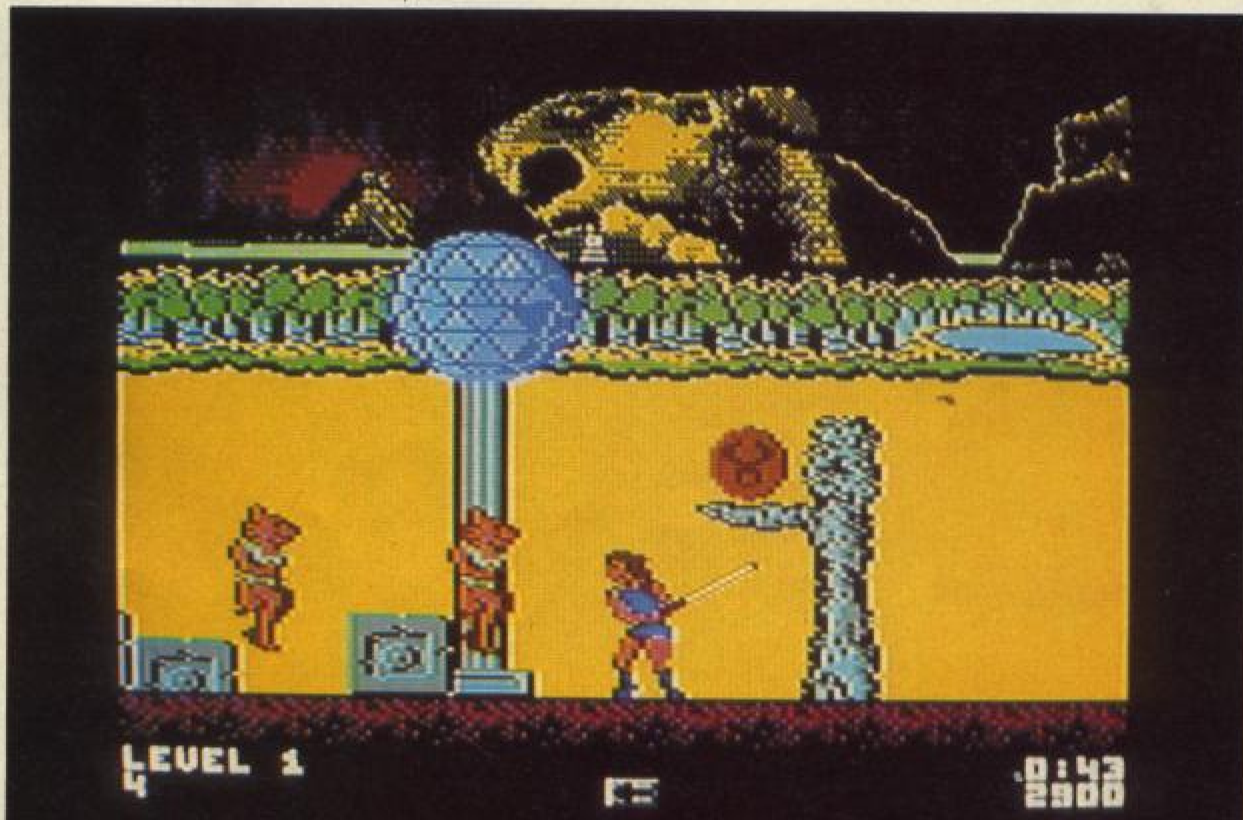


First of all it was Transformers, The Gobots **and** Masters of the Universe. **Now everyone's favourite bunch of pussycats have been immortalised on your humble home computer. The game is a basic hack and slay affair which I found quite playable at first. However, as time went on I became more and more bored as I hacked away at the seemingly endless droves of molemen. I think beat 'em up fans will enjoy playing** Thundercats**, but I can't see it holding that much of a grip on anyone else.**



Yet another cartoon series makes the journey from the small screen to the 64. Or rather the title crosses over, leaving the actual content far behind. Either way, Thundercats **isn't a complete disaster. The graphics are a strange mixture of digitised pictures, cartoon-style backdrops and large areas of plain colour, which looks odd – but not entirely unpleasant. Gameplay is straightforward, but lacking in control of Lion-o (Lion-o the floor covering, presumably). He can't run** and **defend himself at the same time, and can't turn on the spot. If there are molemen close on either side, as you turn to despatch the second, Lion-o walks straight into him and gets thumped. This is annoying since you can react in time, but are unable to do anything about it. Still,** Thundercats **has an irritatingly addictive quality, and should provide a challenge for a week or two.**

▶ Digitised graphics add to the overall look of *Thundercats*



PRESENTATION 76%
Game restart and highscore table and pleasant screen layout.

GRAPHICS 67%
An unusual ensemble of styles have dubious aesthetic qualities. Brilliant, although superfluous parallax scrolling.

SOUND 79%
Good Hubbard title music, but some of the in-game effects are harsh and ill-suited.

HOOKABILITY 76%
Enthralling action and strangely addictive from the outset.

LASTABILITY 70%
14 levels should provide a good platform for the player's hacking and slaying talents.

OVERALL 74%
Fails to capture the essence of the TV series, but entertaining and addictive nonetheless.




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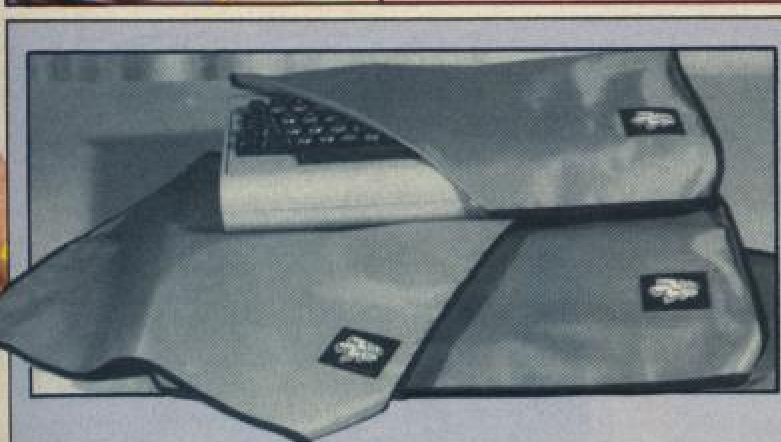
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EARTH ORBIT STATIONS

Electronic Arts, £16.95 disk, joystick with keys

With the increasing realisation of the importance of space exploration as a commercially viable venture, *EOS (Earth Orbit Stations)* comes as a possible candidate as science fact rather than science fiction.

Set toward the end of the century, *EOS* centres around the construction of modular space stations. Up to four players take the role of aspiring Space Directors and attempt to build and manage space stations, produce profitable products, conduct research and eventually aim to fulfill a mission goal. These missions are: Research, Dry Dock, Shuttle, Mars Rescue, Lunar Base, Space Colony and the final option, Search for Life.

'Research' is a simple project to help acclimatize the player(s) to the game and its operation. To complete this scenario, each Director builds a profitable space station and follows market trends (as outlined in the EOS news section) to choose the most profitable activity.

Each space station is constructed from purpose built sections that fit together using special connectors. Starting with command, power life and logistics, further sections are added from a wide range of industrial modules.

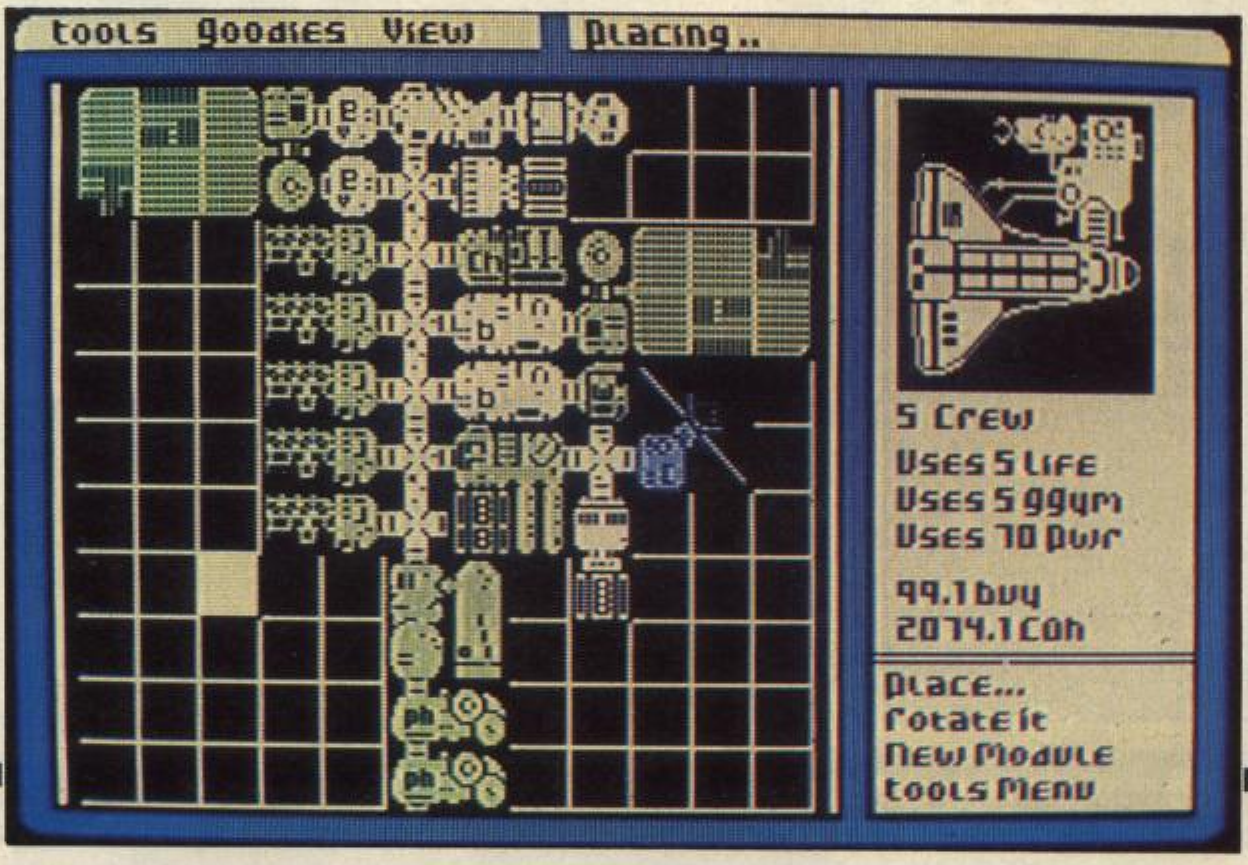
Once a monetary base is developed, research is entered into. Instead of earning money, these modules collect technology points, and the director with the highest amount of points is deemed to have 'won' the Research mission.

A similar method of play is used in later projects, but definite modules are needed for their successful conclusion. In order to get these modules, the technology required for their construction must be researched. A manned lunar base, for instance, can only be set up once the technology to produce fabrications in space, and the necessary transportation has been researched and developed.

The four participants may be human or controlled by the computer, and the game in progress may be saved to disk at any time.



► The option screens look nice, but are a pain to use



► The complex graphics belie its inherent simplicity



The concept of building space stations and going on five year missions to seek out life and strange new worlds is a great idea. However, the execution is very poor indeed. The program constantly accesses the disk and loads the extra data at an toe-curlingly slow speed, forcing you to sit and stare at a blank screen for what seems like hours. The other annoying feature is that the game is also incredibly easy to crash! All you have to do is insert the wrong disk at the wrong time and the machine completely locks up. EOS has some nice ideas, but unfortunately the gameplay is too slow and unrewarding to be worth persevering with.



Having a keen interest in space technology, I hastily loaded the program. At first glance, EOS appears terribly complex and rather impressive, but looks can be deceptive. Once I had familiarised myself with the lengthy (and unnecessarily overcomplicated) instructions, it boils down to the simple task of repeatedly building space station after space station, making as much money as possible (a fairly straightforward task), completing research projects and selecting new modules as and when they appear on the menu. EOS is laborious, repetitive, and more or less crippled by a frequent and pathetically slow disk accessing system. You might enjoy it, but I don't.



EOS is an involved game from the start. Practice is definitely required before you can get around to playing a mission 'seriously', let alone completing one! The vast array of modules for attachment provide plenty of scope for station construction, and with seven missions, the possibilities are endless! The time taken to process each turn could have been speeded up, and possibly the instructions could have contained a couple more diagrams for the first-time player.

PRESENTATION 38%
Slow and cumbersome disk access, badly structured menu system and limited and slightly confusing instructions.

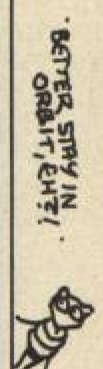
GRAPHICS 55%
Adequate representation of stations and modules.

SOUND 23%
Pathetic title rendition of Strauss' 'Blue Danube' and meagre beeps to confirm selections thereafter.

HOOKABILITY 25%
It takes quite a while to wade through the instructions and lengthy disk operations.

LASTABILITY 32%
There are plenty of missions, but single player mode is fairly pointless and the computer is a poor adversary.

OVERALL 40%
An admirable idea, but the design and implementation is far below expectations of the asking price.



CAPTAIN AMERICA

GO!, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick only

Captain America's foe, the mad Dr Megalomann, has issued a grim ultimatum: submit him the Presidency of America or suffer the consequences of an exploding underground germ missile!

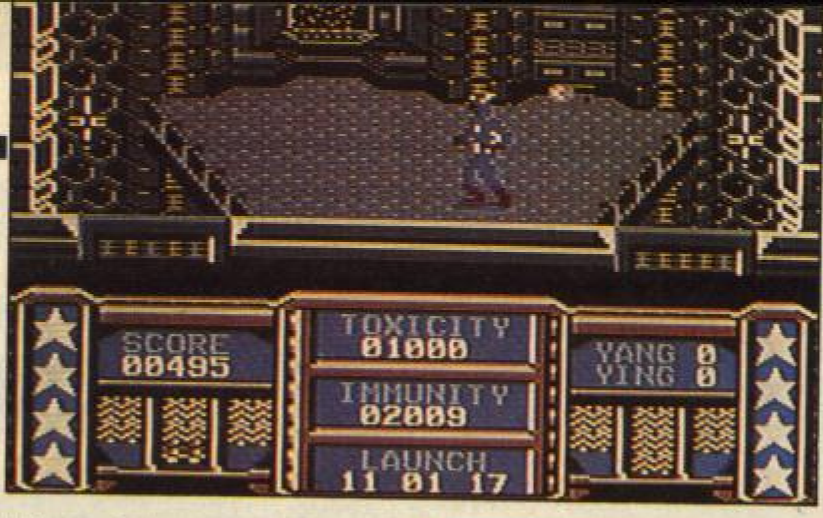
With the fatal deadline only an hour away, Captain America is called upon to enter the multi-level bunker, better known as the Doom Tube, and neutralise the missile before it releases its contents.



Well, what a less-than-auspicious start for GO! Captain America is pure rubbish. While it does in fact look and sound quite good, the gameplay is repetitious and dull. Just to make it even worse, it's hard too. An annoying aspect is the program's persistence on running the same old 'joke'('By the time you read this the Tube will self-destruct'. Cue static, then, 'Only joking – this time'). This side-splitter appears every time you restart the game, which is really irritating. Come on, GO! let's see something a bit more playable.



I used to collect Marvel comics years ago, and therefore received this with nostalgic interest. However, my high hopes were soon dashed. The graphics are unusual, and the Captain America sprite is great – but apart from that, there's little else of merit. The gameplay is original, which is a nice thing to see, but it's also very confusing and severely lacking in variety. Captain America wanders around the seemingly alien environment looking completely out of place. It'd have been nice if he'd been battling some of his old Axis enemies, or some super villain rather than just slinging his shield at a series of boring automatons. Perhaps GO! can have a second crack at the licence.



The whole Doom Tube is contaminated with the toxin, the concentration of which increases towards the bottom of the shaft. Captain America only operates safely on levels with a lower toxin level than his immunity count – entering a room to the contrary proves rapidly fatal.

The Tube is inhabited by robot guards who fire upon the hero. Mr America isn't defenceless though, and has an armoury of six shields which destroy the aggressors on contact. If a shield is thrown correctly, it returns to Captain America. However, if one is thrown beyond the confines of the screen, it's lost for good.

To reach the missile chamber, Captain America has to locate the parts of a password and collect the ingredients of an anti-toxin to increase his immunity level.

When the vault is reached, the complete password is entered to neutralise the missile and save the USA.

PRESENTATION 47%
Restart and music on/off options, but the instructions are very unhelpful.

GRAPHICS 69%
Well detailed and nicely coloured backgrounds and reasonable sprites.

SOUND 61%
An unusual, but oddly pleasant title tune, with fairly average spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 38%
Poor instructions lead to confusion and the gameplay only serves to compound this.

LASTABILITY 35%
The repetitive and difficult gameplay gives *Captain America* little lasting appeal.

OVERALL 36%
The Marvel Comics' hero looks totally out of place in this ill-conceived and poorly executed shoot 'n' search game.

HOW TO BE A COMPLETE BASTARD

Virgin Games, £9.95 cassette, joystick or keys

Ade Edmondson, BA(stard) has decided to follow-up his book with a computer game. The player controls the obnoxious author around a Yuppie party he has gate-crashed and tries to offend as many guests as possible, causing them to leave. While doing this, he attempts to score points for carrying out particularly horrible deeds, such as putting clingfilm over the toilet and hurling dog mess around the room.



I'm a great fan of 'sexy' Ade Edmondson, and have followed his antics from 'The Young Ones' to 'Comic Relief' – he's hilarious! So, why don't I find this game particularly funny? Maybe it's because the so-called humour is incredibly infantile. When you have features like 'fartometers' and 'weeometers', it does seriously make me wonder what computer games are coming to. The graphics are totally pathetic, with feeble sprites staggering around a series of unclear and unimaginative backdrops. The £10 price tag has got to be the funniest thing of all.

The display is in 'Bastavision' which comprises two viewing screens, each of which can display four different angles of the trainee idiot. This means that the player views his protegeé from the side and behind simultaneously.

While roaming the house, Ade searches household furniture for items to help carry out his horrible pranks. The most significant of these include urinating and passing wind, preferably in public places for maximum offence. The potential for these acts of indecency are measured on two meters either side of the screen, which increase the more Ade consumes or imbibes.



The book is amusing in a lavatorial sort of way, but unfortunately the computer version falls flat on its face. Once you've seen all the jokes and done all pranks, the action becomes very tedious and there's very little urge to continue. The sprites are poorly animated, and the background graphics are pathetic. Sound effects are a rarity, and the title tune isn't in character with the action. Ade moves around the house at a staggeringly slow speed, which makes the action terribly frustrating. If you want to be both amused and entertained, buy the book and put the change towards a couple of good budget titles.

Ultimately, Ade attempts to score points for grossness, and when he manages to make a guest leave, one of the letters in 'Complete Bastard' lights up at the bottom of the screen. His unsavoury task is deemed complete when all the letters are lit.



PRESENTATION 59%
Good packaging, but an awkward and unclear display

GRAPHICS 31%
Tiny, badly animated and monochrome backdrops.

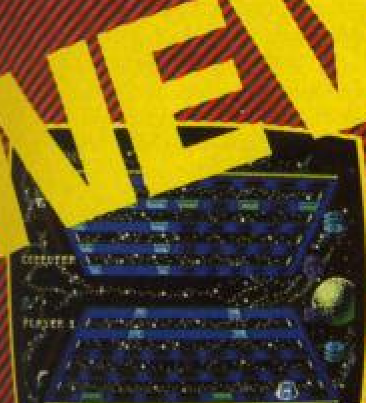
SOUND 42%
A few effects and an unsuitable title tune.

HOOKABILITY 52%
The display is confusing, but the jokes amuse.

LASTABILITY 34%
It doesn't take long for the humour to wear thin, and once this happens there's little to keep you playing.

OVERALL 33%
A poor attempt at a dubious conversion.


FLASHPOINT



ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

BANGKOK KNIGHTS

System 3, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

● A technically and visually stunning kick-boxing simulation

Following hot on the heels of the highly successful *Last Ninja* is System 3's long-awaited martial arts simulation, *Bangkok Knights*.

Huge 'cartoon style' sprites and multi-directionally scrolling backdrops portray the action as the player travels to Bangkok and partakes in a kick-boxing championship. Control is achieved in what has become 'standard' fashion for beat 'em ups: all eight joystick positions are used for different attacks, with a further eight obtainable with the button depressed. These moves range from high and low punches to shin and head kicks. What isn't so standard is the optional 'intelligent' attack system. In this mode each joystick position corresponds to two attacks: a short and long range. The program knows how far the player is from his opponent, and the computer selects the attack with the correct range needed to hit – very useful for the first-time player.

When the combatants are locked in battle, the strength and endurance meters at the bottom of the screen come into play. Strength is related to the number of exhausting moves a player has executed. Many head kicks, for example, tire the fighter quickly, while punches are far more economical. Endurance is simply an indication of how much more damage a fighter can take before he is knocked down. The winner is the first to knock down his opponent three times.

The player starts as a country boy, and proves his worth by battling a series of local hard-men. Man Chu Man is the first opponent and is fought on the edge of a high cliff. Next comes a jungle confrontation with the psychotic Bambo. Finally the budding boxer takes a trip to the market place in the centre of town where that duckin' and divin' cheeky chappie, Killa Kale, is confronted. Only when these three foes are defeated can the championships be entered.

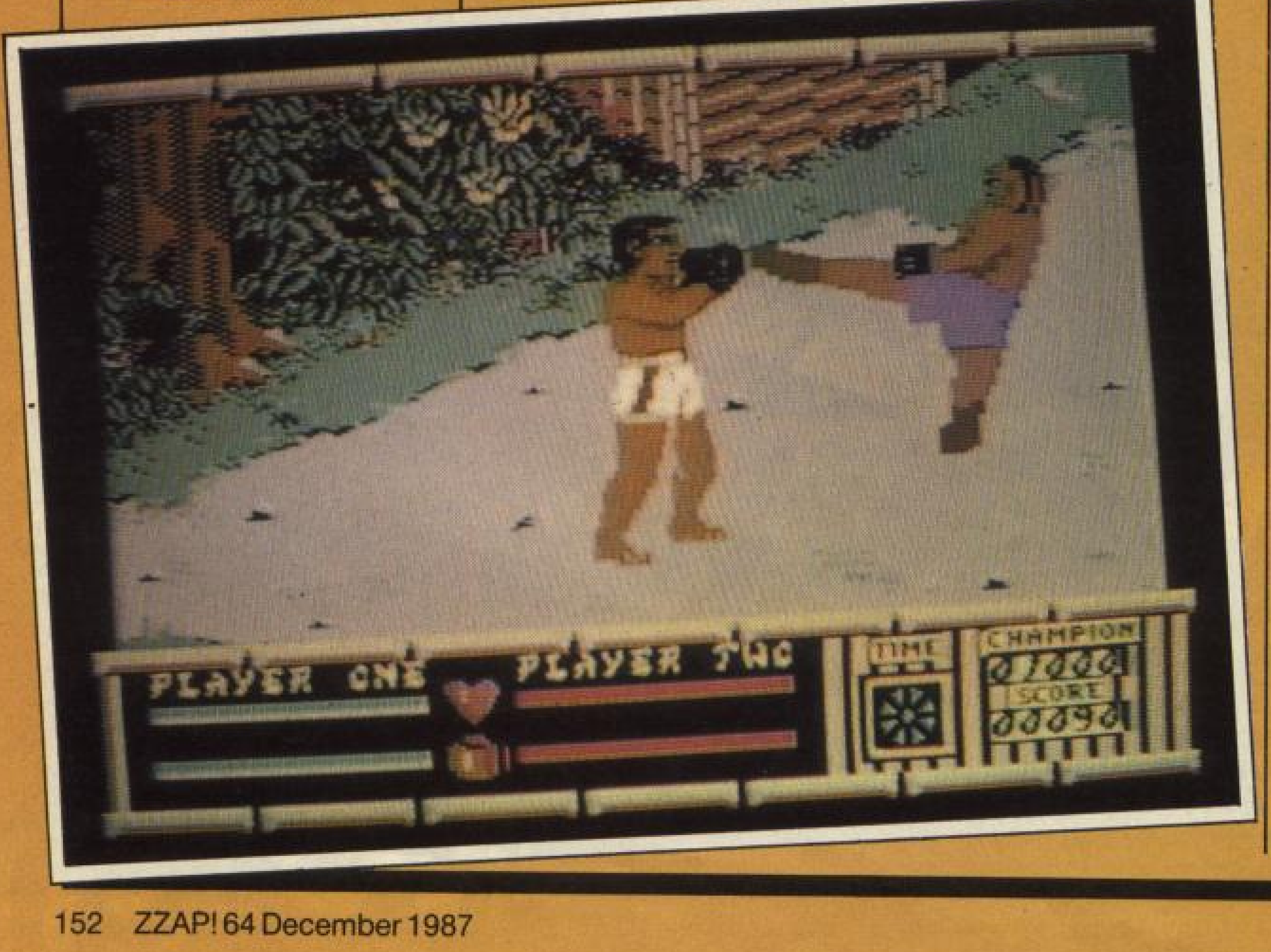
In the finals, the player contests four bouts against eight different opponents. Each of the fighters



► **Battling it out in a downtown Bangkok marketplace**



► **Huge, smoothly animated figures give *Bangkok Knights* an added dimension**





It seems that combat games are definitely back in favour again, with International Karate + **and** Renegade **last month, and now** Bangkok Knights**. Although not as perfectly produced as** IK+**, this is just as playable, with a large variety of opponents and attack styles. The sprites are amazing, they're incredibly big, very well animated, and are complemented by classic sampled sounds when blows land, or one of the fighters collapses. I'm not too sure about the computer-aided attacks – it's a good idea, but not on a game of this type where reactions and joystick handling should be a premium. It smacks of a 'help' mode in chess. In its favour, it does at least enable novices to learn the game quickly. Still, that's my only niggle – otherwise** Bangkok Knights **is superb, and shouldn't be missed.**



has a specialised move, including deadly blown kisses, swift kicks to the lower regions, toe-stomps, head butts and as a light joke, Ninja Magic!

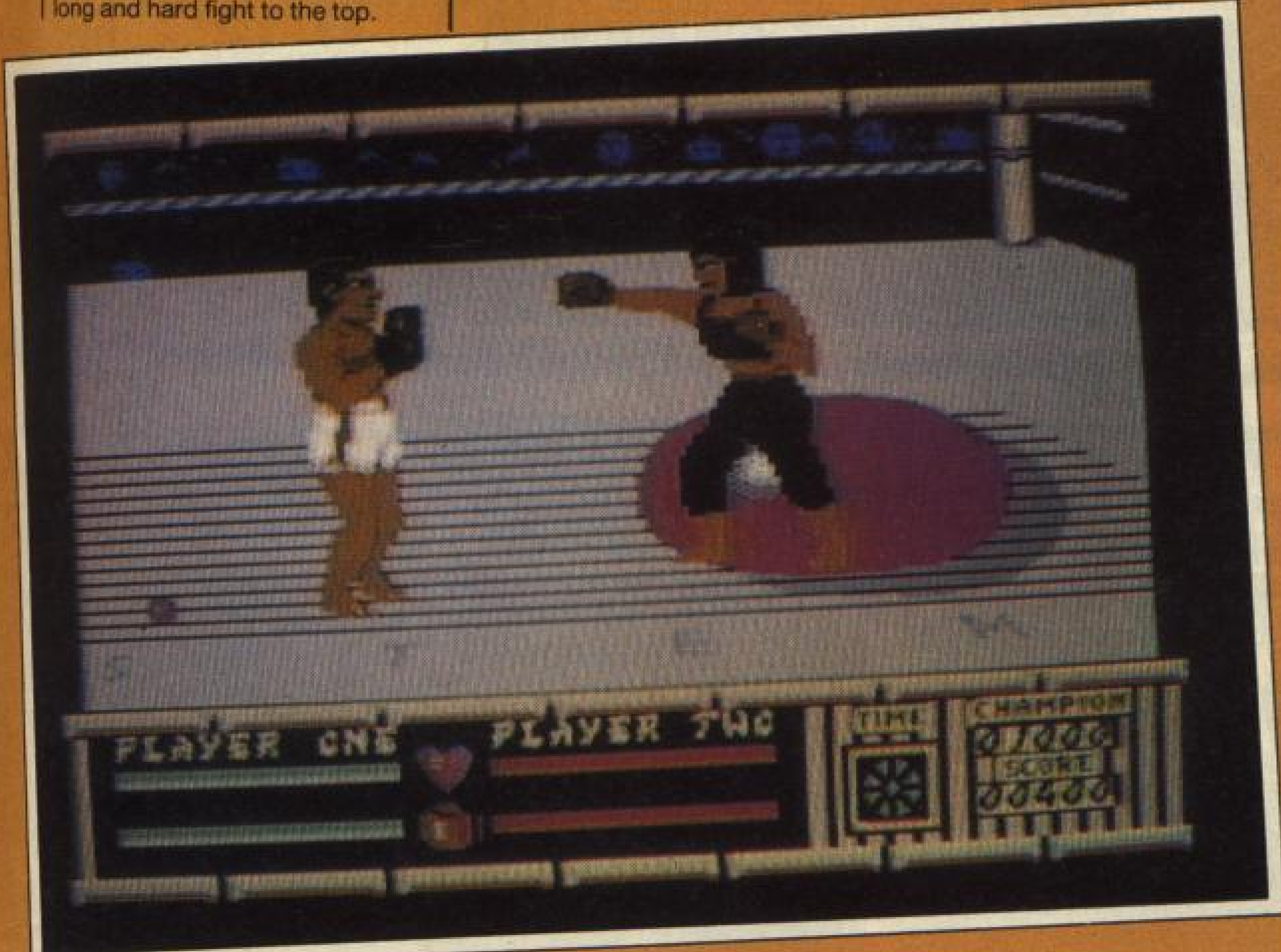
Only when all eight fighters have been disposed of is the title of Champion awarded – but it's a long and hard fight to the top.



▶ The attention to detail is superb – right down to the curvaceous sign bearer

Beat 'em up fans have never had it so good! The latest offering of Oriental violence has a humorous slant, and is very, very playable. The graphics are marvellous, with huge, beautifully animated sprites fighting across equally good backdrops. Some of the moves are great, and I particularly like the way the fighter splats like a concertina when he gets knocked on the head. Programmer Mark Spruthers has also done wonders with the controls – as well as normal fighting mode, there's also the 'intelligent' joystick option which lets you concentrate more on dodging blows, than dealing them. The action is nicely structured, and the intro fights before the contest give the player a chance to warm-up for the really tough guys (and girls). Bangkok Knights **is a very playable and entertaining beat 'em up, and I thoroughly recommend you try it out.**





▶ Fighting action in the kick-boxing ring – obviously sponsored by System 3

System 3'a latest release is beautifully designed, and really pushes the beat 'em up genre to its limits. There are many features which set it apart, most notable of which is the huge characters that battle across the excellent backdrops. Their sheer size alone is stunning, but add to this some great animation and you have a truly impressive game. Perhaps its most appealing facet – and one it shares with its predecessor, The Last Ninja **– is that it's so well produced. It's full of neat touches that make it interesting and pleasant to play, such as the screen 'fade' and the way the players appear and disappear.** Bangkok Knights **may only be a beat 'em up, but for fans of the genre it's ten quid wisely spent.**



PRESENTATION 94%
Very slick in-game presentation, further enhanced by the amazingly original computer assisted attack option.

GRAPHICS 93%
Big, colourful and well animated, with superb backgrounds.

SOUND 89%
Quality sampled effects for the fights, and good tunes throughout.

HOOKABILITY 86%
Fighting is tough, but the 'intelligent' joystick control helps.

LASTABILITY 84%
Enough opponents to make the game last more than just a few knights.

OVERALL 90%
A competent and playable beat 'em up, which has enough variety and innovation to make it a worthwhile purchase.

ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

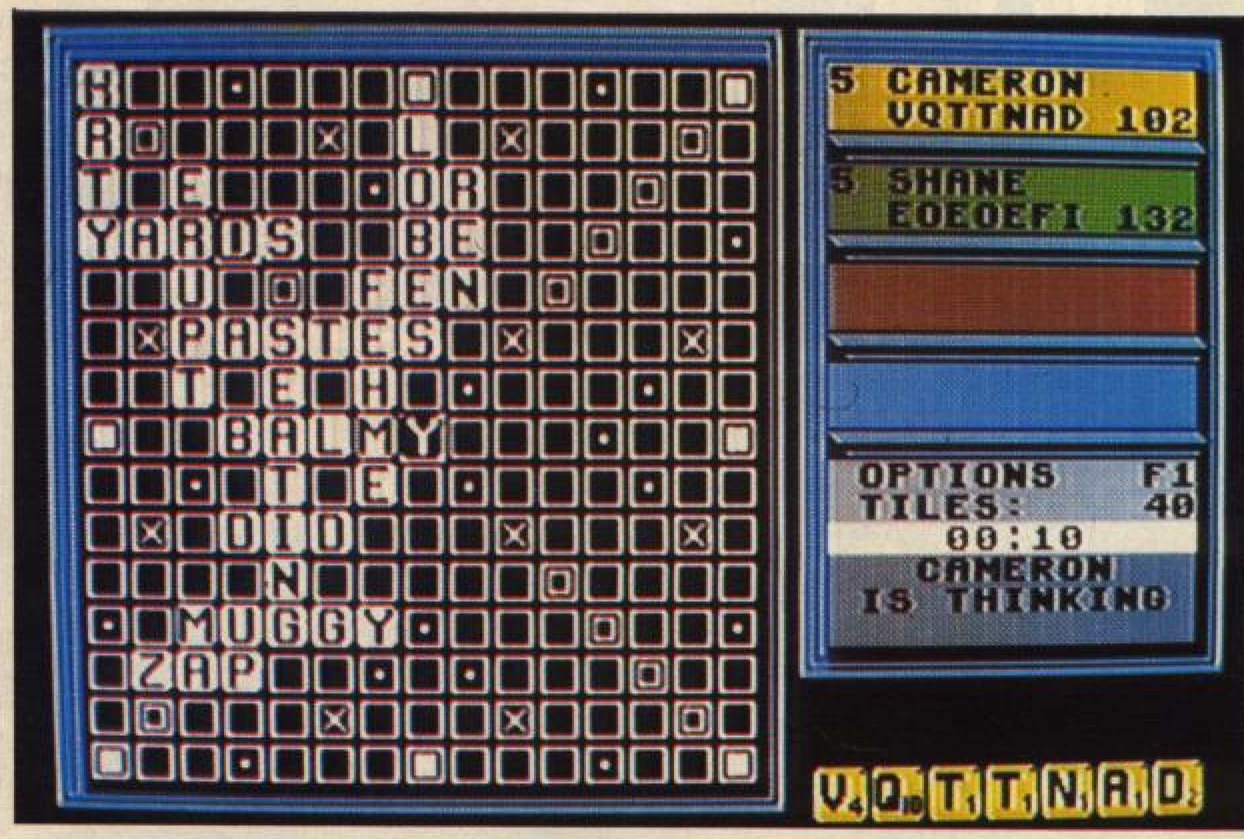
COMPUTER SCRABBLE DE LUXE

Leisure Genius/Virgin, £12.95 cass, £15.95 disk, keys only

JW Spear's classic board game was first conceived in the late 1940's, and since then has appeared in many formats – Scrabble, Scrabble De Luxe, Travel Scrabble and Pocket Scrabble. Now the range is further expanded with a computer version of *Scrabble De Luxe*.

As expected, the game follows the rules of the board version. At the start an options screen allows any combination of four human or computer opponents to be chosen. Computer players are individually set to one of eight levels. One to four have a limited vocabulary and are therefore more suitable for a novice. On levels five and eight the computer also responds with any of the acceptable two, three and four letter words and extensions found in Chambers' 20th Century Dictionary and Chambers' WORDS, the official Scrabble reference books. The entire vocabulary contains over 20,000 words – so prepare to see words that you never thought existed!

Each player is given seven let-



► **The computerised Scrabble board. Cam, what's a 'FEHME'?**

X–15 ALPHA MISSION

Activision, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

America is under threat from a terrorist organisation who have secretly placed an armed space station in orbit. Unless their demands are met, the station's full destructive power is to be turned on a number of unspecified American cities.

Only one course of action remains: to send a pilot, flying the X-15 spaceplane into orbit to seek out and destroy the space station. That pilot is you.

After a mission briefing from the Pentagon containing the vital access code for the space station, the mission begins. The X-15 is flown through three levels of the atmosphere, eventually reaching outer space. Each level has its own brand of enemy craft, including missile-firing helicopters, jets and killer satellites which are all destroyed by accurate shooting. Cruise missiles, however, are immune to the X-15's armoury, and are avoided by rapidly climbing or diving.

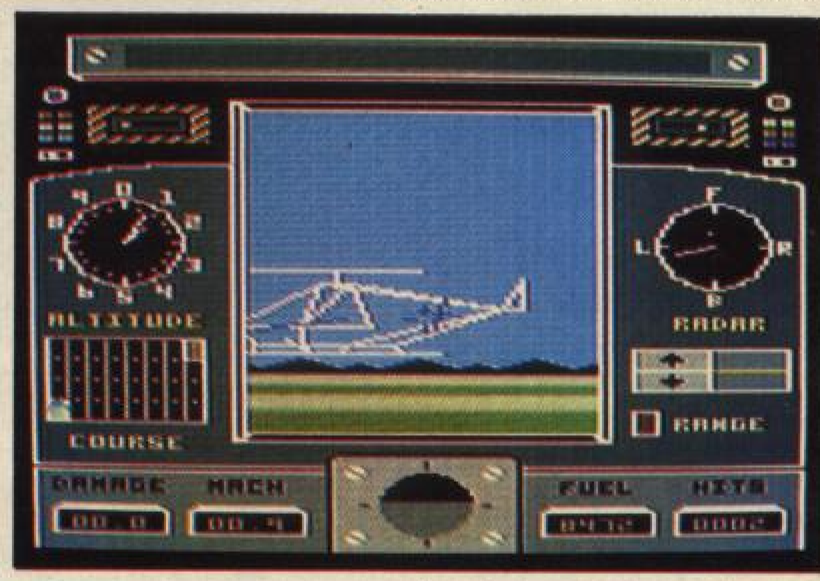
Once the space station becomes visible, placing the cross hairs over the station's centre is met with a prompt to input the access code given at the start of the mission. Successful code entry prompts the launch of the excursion module, which has to be flown through a mass of asteroids



Behind the fanciful plot of X-15 Alpha Mission **lies a reasonable shoot' em up. Fighting through the levels requires a lot of skill and endurance, with the killer satellites proving the toughest opponents as you near the space station. The simplistic vector-style graphics are effective and well executed. Sound effects are a rarity though, with the tunes and effects proving totally unsuitable. The lack of variety between the first three levels, both in gameplay and graphics makes it rather tedious to play, and once completed, there isn't much of an incentive to warrant another attempt.**



After reading the scenario on the inlay, I had high hopes. However, they were soon dashed after a couple of sessions. Although the program is very slick, with some great graphics and clever effects, the gameplay isn't very exciting. There is a challenge there, but the action is so repetitive it's hardly worth persevering with. If programmer John Van Ryzin had put a little more thought into the game design, X-15 Alpha Mission **might have been good, but as it stands, there just isn't enough to warrant the £10 price tag.**



► **An enemy helicopter whizzes past the cockpit**

ters, randomly apportioned from the standard set of 98 plus two blanks. A word is made and placed on the board in such a way that it fits in with one of the words already there. The seven letters forming the rack may be 'juggled' around, allowing the player to view the tiles in a random order. Placing the tiles is accomplished by typing in the full word and positioning a cursor on the board where the first letter is to be. Typing 'A' or 'D' places the word across the board or down accordingly. Unfortunately, the 'board' provided is displayed in monochrome rather then the normal beige with red and blue squares. While this forms no major drawback, it's a rather poor substitute for the real thing and becomes harsh on the eyes after a heavy playing session.

Once a word is positioned, the computer displays the score gained by its placement, taking into account any new words made and the premium squares the word falls on (double word and letter score, and triple word and letter score). A prompt asks if a new word is to be positioned, and if the score is adequate, a response of 'N' ends the turn, and the next player's rack is displayed.

As the computer's vocabulary is finite, it occasionally comes across a word during play that it does not recognise, and a challenge is issued. If it turns out that a player's word does not in fact exist, it is removed and the current turn forfeited.

The game continues in this fashion until either one player uses all of his tiles and no more remain, or neither player can place any more tiles. The computer then displays the final scores and asks if another game is to be played.

A feature of this version is a built-in clock which allows contestants to play against an adjustable timer. This can speed the game up tremendously and also adds the tension of being under pressure to finish a turn within a short period of time. The clock may be set from a lightning ten seconds to a more leisurely 9 minutes and 59 seconds.

Aesthetic niggles apart, *Scrabble De Luxe* is about as good as one can expect from home computer. It's easy to use, fast, and provides a brilliant opponent. There are plenty of options which also make the game user friendly and adjustable to suit the human player. If you're a fan of the board game, but lack an opponent, *Scrabble De Luxe* is an almost essential purchase. Those who haven't played before should try it out – not only does it get the old grey matter clanking back into action, but also helps expand your vocabulary AND is highly enjoyable. *Scrabble De Luxe* may be pricey, but you'll be playing it for years!



After John Van Ryzin's previous effort, HERO, **I expected something a mite special. All the ingredients are there, but while the graphics and style of the game are quite polished, the repetitive nature and lack of variety lead to a swiftly diminishing interest. The graphics are clever, with some pretty nippy vectors, but the X-15's all-important lasers are inaccurate. Helicopters and jets can only be destroyed when they appear full size; blasting an approaching dot is useless. Both sections do hold a challenge of sorts, but the shallow nature of the game becomes apparent on repeat plays. I really don't think that** X-15 Alpha Mission **holds very much in the lastability stakes – I'm bored with it already.**

in order to successfully land on the station's surface.

On landing, a group of remote control robots disembark and are guided across the station surface in order to seek out and connect with the exterior weapon systems. Once a droid is securely interfaced, it is then ordered to self-destruct, effectively disabling that particular system. When all the weapon systems have been destroyed, the last robot is then directed to the central power system where the station finally explodes.

PRESENTATION 78%
Annoying delay at the beginning, but otherwise decent.

GRAPHICS 67%
Extremely quick vector graphic enemy craft, but fairly average thereafter.

SOUND 40%
Uninspiring title music and in-game effects.

HOOKABILITY 58%
After the compulsory (and somewhat tedious) lift-off sequence, the first shoot 'em up section provides moderate excitement.

LASTABILITY 45%
Once the first section is mastered, the second section shouldn't provide too much of a hurdle for the hardened gamester.

OVERALL 46%
A brave attempt at a strategy/shoot 'em up, which unfortunately falls short of the mark.



ZZAP! TEST

NEBULUS

Hewson, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick or keys

● **Incredibly compulsive platform/puzzle action**



On the planet Nebulus, trouble is brewing. Someone has been building giant towers in the sea without planning permission, and Destructo Inc has been given the job of demolishing them. The player takes the role of the unfortunate worker who has been given the mission.

The demolition expert arrives at the bottom of each tower by submarine. He's a typical Nebulese; a fat, little green biped capable of jumping and firing energy blobs.

To successfully destroy a tower, the worker reaches the top within a set time limit. This is easier said than done, and requires the worker to negotiate a series of platforms, steps, lifts, and doors which run all the way around the outside of the building. The action is displayed in 3D, with the tower rotating as the worker walks around its exterior. Walking up steps, or using lifts to reach a higher level makes the screen scroll vertically.

The worker's progress up the tower is hindered by a variety of obstructions, ranging from bouncing balls and rotating aliens to flashing wall blocks and flying eyeballs. Bouncing balls and flashing blocks are destroyed by energy blobs, while all other hazards are avoided. Failure to dodge any moving object, or stepping onto a disappearing platform results in the worker falling. He's a hardy beast and is able to drop any

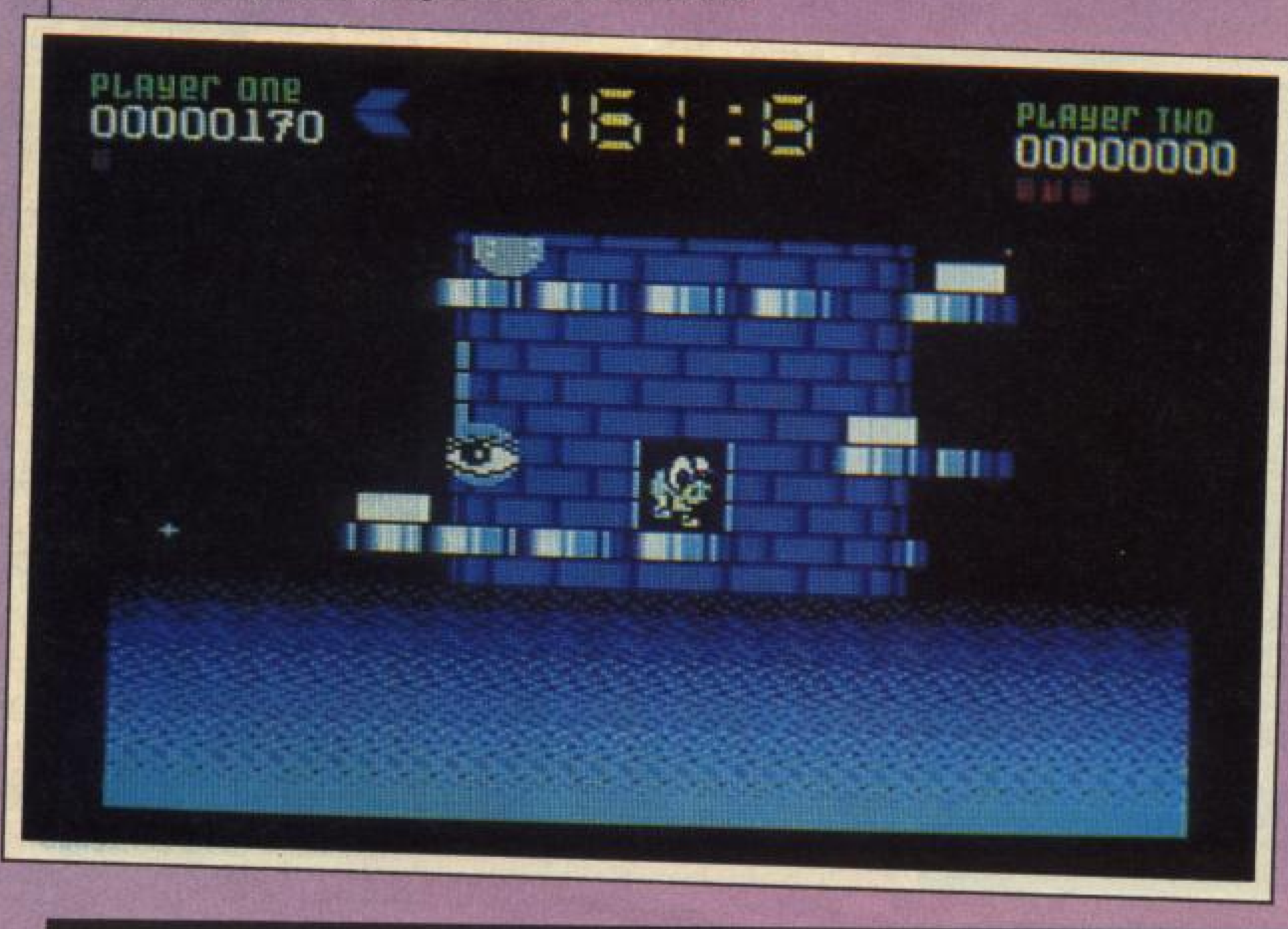


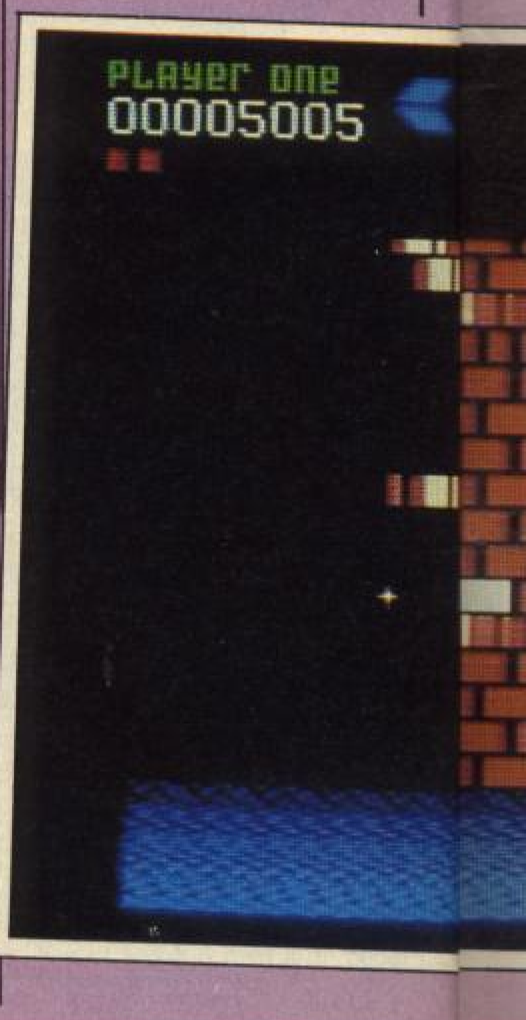
► The spheres can be shot but the eye must be dodged

There's no doubt about it, Nebulus is sheer inspiration – it's completely original and beautifully designed, and I defy anyone to play it and keep their cool. Not since Boulderdash **has a game been so playable** and **frustrating. Each level has been brilliantly thought out, so that you always get a little bit further with every go. However, when you just begin to think you're doing well, some horrible trap or puzzle claims that last life, and you have to start all over again. This gameplay is incredibly rewarding, but never quite satisfying enough, so you have to return for 'just another go'. Consequently, once you start playing it's very difficult to stop – work completely ground to a halt in the office! The marvellous gameplay is supported by some incredible graphics. The 3D rotational effect is absolutely amazing, and the main sprite is superbly animated. Even the sound effects are good!** Nebulus **is a wonderful combination of platform action and mind-bending puzzles, and offers days of solid play – buy it at your peril.**



► **The Destructo Inc worker begins his ascent of the first tower**





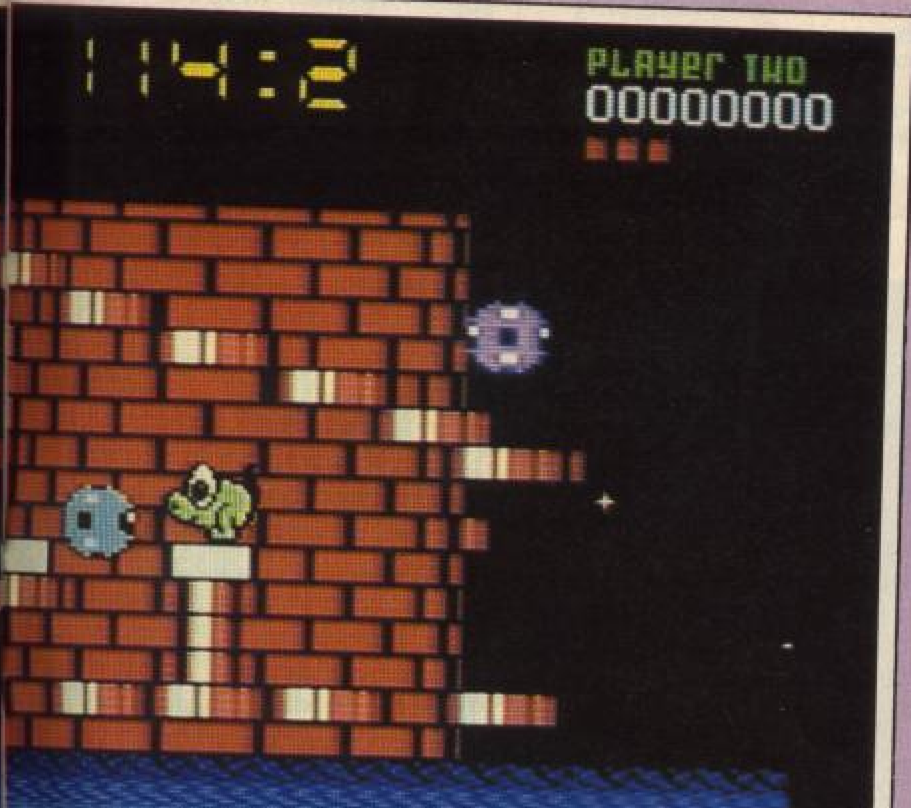


▶ **Incredibly effective parallax scrolling on the sub-aqueous bonus section**

distance, as long as a platform breaks his fall. However, dropping into the sea is fatal, and one of his five lives is lost. A life is also lost if the time limit expires before the top of the tower is reached.

When the highest door is entered, the tower is destroyed and sinks rapidly into the sea. The worker reboards his mini-sub, and enters a horizontally scrolling bonus level where he attempts to catch fish by firing air bubbles at them. After this brief interlude, he is deposited at the base of the next tower to continue his work. There are eight towers in all, each requiring a different strategy to complete them.

▶ **Riding an elevator on the second level**



I often find it amusing how the amount of hype given to a game is often inversely proportional to the quality of the finished product. Nebulus **is another case in point. No prerelease advertising, one demo game at the PCW show, and that's about it. The game is absolutely superb; simple,** totally **original, and brilliantly executed. Graphically,** Nebulus **is flawless. Watch the rotating towers from a couple of feet away and I challenge anyone not to be totally convinced. If this isn't enough, the parallax scrolling in the bonus section is equally incredible. This gameplay hasn't been neglected either: the word 'addictive' fails to amply convey the lure that** Nebulus **holds. Forget film tie-ins and 'officially licensed' games – true originality wins through every time. Buy it and believe.**



In what has to be the most amazing month for software, my money goes on Nebulus **as the most entertaining of the three Gold Medals. The graphics have seriously got to be seen to be believed – still shots CANNOT do them justice. Their quality is in the animation: the parallax scrolling, the tower rotation, and the cute little green alien are all stunning. This game is not just technically brilliant though, as the programmer has managed to capture the most elusive element of all – addictiveness; I'm not sure whether it's the** Boulderdash **theory of 'this time I'll beat it', or the slick presentation that makes the whole experience of playing enjoyable, but you just keep coming back for more. It seems that Hewson have again shown the bigger software houses that quality is what counts, not just a good idea, an expensive license, or glossy advertising. Keep it up! The software industry needs games like this.**



PRESENTATION 95%
Beautifully presented, with all the in-game options necessary.

GRAPHICS 97%
Truly stunning effects for the tower rotation, and excellent parallax scrolling in the bonus stage.

SOUND 88%
High quality title music, and thoughtful effects throughout.

HOOKABILITY 97%
Absolutely impossible to stop playing – even though it's infuriatingly difficult.

LASTABILITY 91%
The eight towers require enormous perseverence to crack, and even when they've been conquered, there's always an improved time to go for.

OVERALL 97%
One of the most innovative games ever, and one which adds a whole new dimension to the platform game format.

COMING SOON TO A MONITOR NEAR YOU

US Gold have been busy this month, with two arcade conversions and a new RPG in the final throes of completion.

The first of the conversions is *Sidearms*, Capcom's one or two player horizontally scrolling, progressive shoot 'em up. The two fighters fly across an alien-infested landscape, blasting for all they're worth. Occasionally a dead alien yields a bonus pod, which enhances the ship's defences or offences when collected,



► *Sidearms* takes the form of a two-player *Salamander* variant

In two player mode, both vessels appear on screen simultaneously, theoretically making the assault easier. Occasionally, both merge into one craft for particularly difficult areas – such as the end of a level.

The action is very frenetic, and looks like being almost as good a blast as the original.

The second arcade conversion is Atari's *720°*, a technically amazing skateboard game which is currently being programmed by *Space Harrier* author, Chris Butler.

The player collects tickets in the multi-directionally scrolling Skate City to gain access to one of the many skate parks. Once inside, he works on his techniques in both freestyle and competitive action, performing as many stunts as possible to earn bonus points, hopefully building up to the 720° – a manoeuvre in which he performs two complete revolutions while airborne.



▲ Skateboarding looks like its coming back into fashion, with US Gold's *720°*

Chris Butler has coped magnificently, transferring much of the original feel into the game while maintaining a high graphic quality. The game should be available the New Year – so look out for a review in the coming months.

In a different vein, GO! are currently working on a new RPG to compete in the *Ultima/Bard's Tale* genre. The game, *Wizard Warz*, is the tale of a megalomaniacal warlock determined to become Chief Wizard. To achieve this end, he travels the countryside, fighting monsters and other wizards, building up an arsenal of spells as he goes.

The screen format is standard for this type of game: a small graphic display of the land, surrounded by information about the player's character and his enemies. For combat, the display is magnified, with the opposing parties duelling in a small arena, set in the surrounding countryside. The player has an armoury of spells which to cast, each one exhausting the opposing wizard in a different way.

While the idea behind the game is not the most original, the approach is novel, with a greater than usual emphasis on combat and high quality presentation.

▼ GO!'s latest RPG/arcade adventure promises a wealth of spelling, shooting and searching



It may have escaped your attention, but Piranha are in the final stages of completing *Judge Death*, the latest computer version of a *2000 AD* comic star. In this latest release, the player controls psi-operative, Judge Anderson – Judge Death's living nemesis – in a mission to find and destroy all four of the Dark Judges: Fear, Fire, Mortis and Death.

In its present stage of development, the game involves two shooting sequences. In the first, picture-bearing targets flash on randomly for a few brief seconds. Some have images of ►



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PALACE SOFTWARE

After the enormous success of *Barbarian* on many machine formats, Steve Brown and his team at Palace Software are set for their next stunner, *Rimrunner*. In the highly original scenario, a race of insectoids is under attack from a mutant breed of arachnoids (spiders to you). To defend themselves, the insectoids have built giant domes to live under on each of their planets, but these are powered by generators which require constant maintenance to keep them working properly.

The player controls an insectoid given the responsibility of keeping the domes working, and travels from generator to generator around the rim of the dome on the back of his trusty dinosaur steed – the Rimrunner. Hindering him in his task is a huge number of aliens, which attack in waves as he runs between generators. This forms the main body of the game, and is depicted as a fast, horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up.

Should the player maintain the generators for the required period of time, he completes that level and moves on to the next, more difficult planet.

The game should be a polished production, featuring parallax effects on the horizontal scrolling backdrops, more brilliant Richard Joseph music and FX and some surprising touches: at the start, the player's insect calls his beast by whistling, as if calling a dog, and when the beast dies, he turns to a skeleton beneath the rider!



► The hero of Palace's new horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up has an unusual mode of transport . . .

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

Competing with US Gold's *720 ° is Electronic Art's Skate Or Die*, another skateboarding simulation written by the authors of *Summer Games*. In this version, the player chooses to enter one of five different competitions, three based on professional events and two specially designed for the game. The three 'real' events are Ramp Freestyle, Downhill Race and Ramp Hill Jump, in which up to eight players compete for the highest points and best times. In the two special events, Pool Jousting and City Downhill Battle, the player competes against an opponent – either a second player or one of three computer adversaries. It's certainly looking good, but you'll have to wait until next month for the review.



◄ Yet another skateboarding game – better go and dust off the old 'board!

the four judges, which are shot for points, and others have innocent citizens, which are avoided. Similarly, in the second sub-game, dark judges appear in the midst of a crowd of citizens, and again must be carefully shot, as hitting innocents impairs the player's score.

The game is currently at an early stage of development, with rather rough gameplay and crude graphics. Underneath, however, the action feels quite playable. We can but hope that Piranha manages to fulfill the game's potential.



► *Judge Death* boasts some smart Mega-City One graphics



▲ *Octapolis* features vertically scrolling split-screen blasting action



▼ Space sections of *Octapolis* boast 'Parallax perspective horizontal scroll'!



ENGLISH SOFTWARE

Another firm marketed by US Gold, English Software, are currently working on *Octapolis*, which they describe as 'shoot 'em up action united with challenging platform encounters'. This means a strange mix of perspective platform action, with split-screen scrolling and a spaceship flying over the top!

The player takes control of a pilot who has been chosen to tackle the defences of a planet called Octapolis. This planet is the last obstacle to the Imperium's attempted Galactic domination, but it has one of the most impenetrable systems ever created, based on blocking attacker's thought patterns. It has taken 200 years to find a pilot immune to the mental power of the planet, so the role should not be taken lightly!

In what looks like a merger sure to be stranger than *Zig Zag*'s maze and shoot 'em up theme, *Octapolis* is truly attempting to break new ground – it should at least be interesting.

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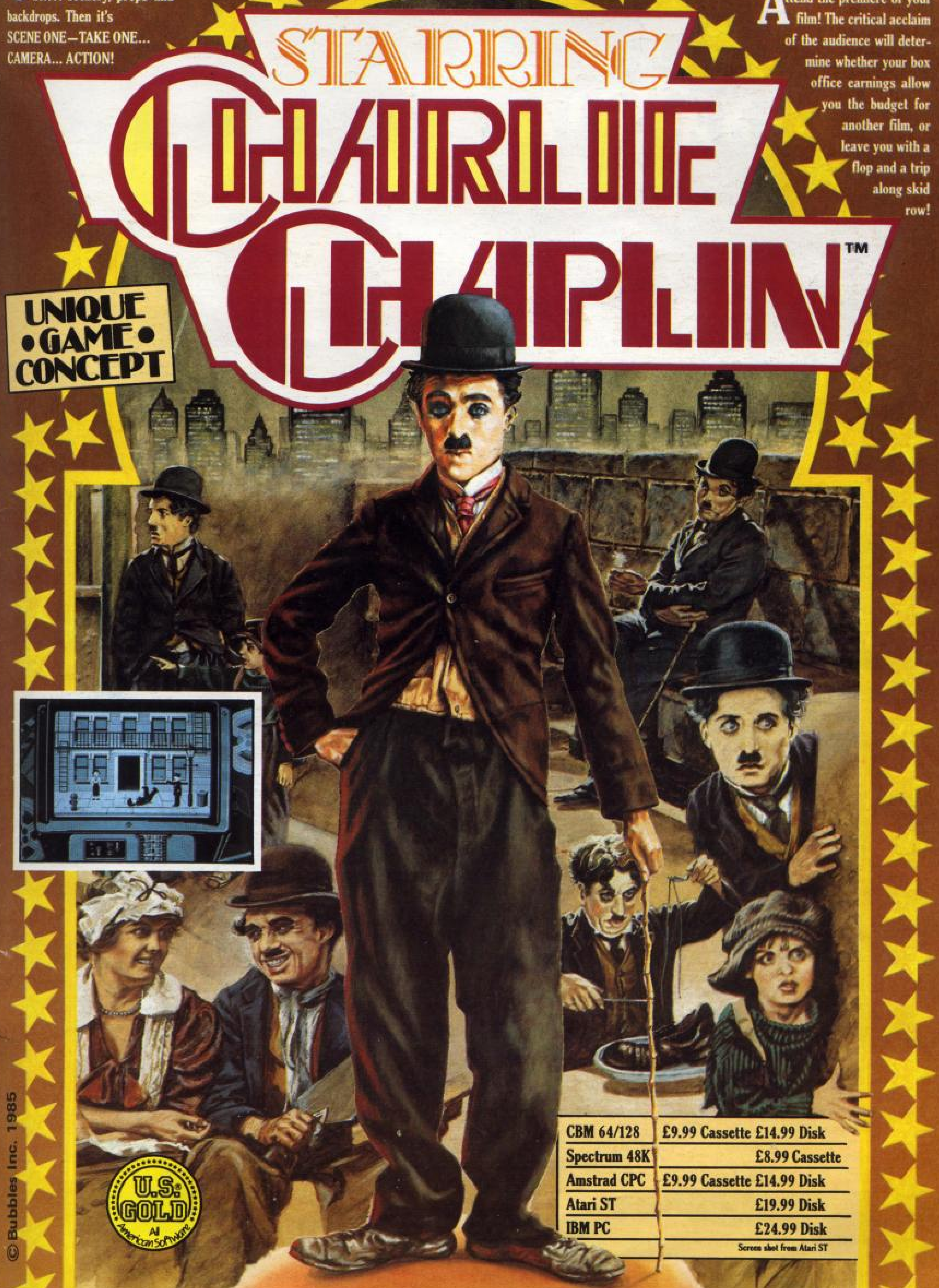
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Screen shot from Atari ST

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